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Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-89-058
Tuesday
28 March 1989

Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

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28 March Middle East and South Asia Review

LD2803125689 [Editorial Report] NOTICE: FBIS wishes to advise that resource constraints will compel discontinuation of the Middle East and South Asia Review effective 1 April.

Lebanon

The combat lines in and around Beirut were calm 28 March after another night of violent shelling, Beirut radio reported. The escalation of the fighting coincided with further efforts by the Arab League committee in Tunis to end the violence and find a solution, the radio said, noting that the committee has held contacts with a number of former Lebanese presidents and prime ministers.

Meanwhile, 84 people have been killed and 355 others wounded in the shelling since 14 March, the report added.

On the Christian side, Voice of Lebanon radio accused the Syrians of opening "the gates of hell" by pouring thousands more rockets and shells on the eastern area the night of 27 March. The Lebanese Army returned fire at Syrian positions and also checked an advance on the Suq al-Gharb front, killing at least 15 attackers.

The clandestine Radio Free Lebanon reported that the Syrians fired incendiary shells that caused a serious fire in the Al-Dawrah fuel depots.

In a message to President Hafiz al-Asad broadcast by the Voice of Lebanon, General Michel 'Awn urged the Syrian leader to withdraw his troops from Lebanon as there is "no longer a legitimate justification" for the Syrian military presence.

'Awn also contended that Syrian shelling of his office on 14 March was a deliberate attempt to assassinate him.

The other Lebanese prime minister, Salim al-Huss, told journalists in West Beirut that a decision to secure the withdrawal of Syrian forces cannot be made by Gen 'Awn alone, but must be issued by the cabinet of a single government after an alternative for the Syrians has been found to maintain security, Beirut radio noted.

In another development, "nationalist" parties in West Beirut announced their intention to continue the confrontation with East Beirut until 'Awn's "clique" is overthrown, according to Voice of National Resistance radio.

Syria

There will be no need for Syrian forces in Lebanon if and when the Lebanese reach an agreement that establishes an "appropriate" and representative system of government, President al-Asad stated in an interview with TIME magazine broadcast by Damascus radio. However, interference by outside powers like Israel and Iraq delays and obstructs the reconciliation process, he warned.

Iraq's involvement serves neither Iraq nor Lebanon, but merely serves to kill more Lebanese, he claimed.

Regarding the foreign hostages in Lebanon, Al-Asad disclosed that a number of Syrian soldiers were killed "for the sake of the hostages," but Syria still does not know where the hostages are or who their captors are. While reaffirming Syria's desire to secure the hostages' release, the president warned that any "miscalculation" could lead to their death.

Al-Asad also maintained that it is "highly improbable" that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) was behind the blowing up of a Pan Am jet over Scotland, but he promised the issue will be "dealt with" if it is proven the PFLP-GC was responsible.

On the Palestinian issue, Al-Asad said the intifadah (uprising) is "highly appreciated" in Syria and he viewed the U.S.-PLO dialogue as a "positive step." He stressed, however, that the Arab-Israeli conflict is not "owned" by any Arab party, noting that Syria's "pan-Arab" stand on the Palestine question predates the foundation of the PLO and is based on the view that Israel's aspirations go beyond Palestine.

Asked about Egypt, the president maintained that the status of Syria's relations with Egypt now "may be called positive," though he said it is "premature" to talk about a restoration of relations. He noted that Syria will reveal its position on Egypt's return to the Arab League at the next Arab summit.

As for the Soviet Union, he stressed that changes in the "methods" and "form" of Soviet foreign policy have not caused any political change in Soviet-Syrian relations. The USSR still supports the Arabs and believes they are the aggrieved party in the Middle East conflict, he pointed out.

In another Syrian-Soviet development, Defense Minister General Mustafa Talas received visiting Soviet Defense Minister Dmitriy Yazov for talks that focused on ways to promote the relations of "friendship and close cooperation" between the Syrian and Soviet armies, Damascus television noted. TASS said their talks were held in a "warm and friendly atmosphere" and covered a wide range of problems of mutual concern.

King Fahd Tour

Iraq—Iraq and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement in Baghdad 27 March pledging noninterference in each other's internal affairs and nonuse of force in relations between the two states, according to Baghdad radio.

They also pledged to resolve disputes between them by peaceful means. An agreement on the coordination of bilateral and Arab security was also signed, INA reported.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal declared that ties between the two countries "are in their best condition" and that the future of joint Arab action will be "good," INA reported. King Fahd and his delegation ended the visit and left Baghdad later the same day.

Egypt—King Fahd arrived in Cairo 27 March and was met at the airport by President Husni Mubarak, MENA reported. Official talks between the two delegations began later at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, the agency reported.

The two sides discussed bilateral affairs, peace efforts in the Arab world, developments in the Gulf, and the situation in Lebanon. They also reviewed other regional and international issues.

A press briefing in Cairo given by Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif was told that contacts between Egypt and Saudi Arabia "were never discontinued even during the most critical circumstances," MENA reported. Mubarak had earlier told journalists that the events in Lebanon "spell the worst of disasters" for the Arab world.

He called on the Arabs and the international community to "put an end" to the "massacres" in Lebanon, MENA reported.

Egypt and the Peace Process

Egypt is ready to host a "high-level Palestinian-Israeli dialogue," according to Cairo sources cited by Abu Dhabi's AL-ITTIHAD newspaper. The sources added that Mubarak informed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir of this proposal in a message conveyed by Israeli Minister 'Ezer Weizman after his recent visit to Cairo.

Israel

Prime Minister Shamir will arrive in Washington in April with "several ideas" on implementing an interim settlement of the Palestinian issue, but he will tell his U.S. interlocutors that it is "useless" to discuss a permanent settlement with him, Jerusalem radio reported. Shamir's proposals will include various methods and timetables for organizing elections and an autonomy council in the territories. He will point out there is no room for discussion of two issues: an Israeli-PLO dialogue and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

In the territories, a policeman shot dead a 4-year-old boy during a stonethrowing incident, IDF radio reported. At least 10 other Palestinians were injured in other clashes, Jerusalem radio noted.

Missing Yacht Incident

The yacht which "disappeared" in the northern Gulf 23 March was "intercepted" by Iranian naval vessels and escorted to a nearby Iranian island, WAKH reported citing Bahrain's AL-AYYAM. The paper cited "shipping sources" as saying the people on board the yacht were interrogated for 2 hours and then released.

Sudan

General Mubarak 'Uthman Rahmah, the new defense minister, affirmed that the Armed Forces maintain "strict and constant" observance of the Constitution and will always remain trusted guardians of democracy and constitutional legality, Khartoum National Unity radio reported. He declared that he will discharge his duties in a "spirit of pure patriotism" and "without fear or favor."

Afghanistan

The renewed mujahidin attacks on Jalalabad and Qandahar Airport have been repulsed, TASS reported. According to Kabul radio, 190 mujahidin and Pakistani militiamen were killed and 70 others were wounded during the Jalalabad offensive.

The radio also reported a "ruthless and cowardly" attack 26 March by the mujahidin on a convoy of buses travelling from Jalalabad to Kabul which left 21 passengers dead and more than 30 wounded.

The war in Afghanistan has "become even larger in scale" since the Soviet withdrawal, according to a video report broadcast by Moscow television. The report revealed that 12,000 rockets and mortars were fired on Jalalabad on 26 March alone.

Palestinian Affairs

Khalaf Says PLO-U.S. Dialogue 'Positive'

JN2803104089 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0903 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Manama, 28 Mar (WAKH)—Fatah Central Committee member Salah Khalaf, Abu Iyad, has described the second round of the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue as positive.

Abu Iyad told the Bahraini newspaper, AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ, that the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue began to enter into discussion of the basic issues related to the political settlement, although the U.S. viewpoint still adheres to the idea of direct negotiations that precede the international conference.

Salah Khalaf renewed the PLO's rejection of the proposals calling for negotiations between Israel and representatives from the occupied territories to precede dialogue with officials from the PLO. He pointed out that the meetings, which took place recently between Palestinian nationalist figures and Israelis, were mere meetings, not negotiations.

The Palestinian official asserted that the PLO did not submit to the Americans [viewpoint] that terrorism means armed struggle, pointing out that in its dialogue with the U.S. Administration, the PLO asserted that it did not reconsider its stand on armed struggle or pledge to stop it.

Abu Iyad said that the Americans did not demand that the Vietnamese abandon armed struggle during negotiations, so why should they impose this condition on us on behalf of Israel?

Khalaf emphasized that the intifadah [uprising] will continue together with the Palestinian political moves in order to deepen the Israeli political dilemma. He pointed out that the political battle is much harder than the military battle.

Abu Iyad explained that the PLO Central Council meetings, scheduled to begin next Friday [31 March], will discuss and assess the phase that followed the Palestine National Council 19th session and lay plans for future political moves.

'Abd Rabbuh on Eve of Talks

PM2703153189 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Mar 89 pp 1-2

[Zaki Musa report: "On the Eve of Dialogue With the United States 'Abd Rabbuh Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Palestinian Delegation To Raise Three Key Issues"]

[Excerpt] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—In an exclusive statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT hours before the second round of the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue in Tunis today, the head of the Palestinian delegation to the dialogue, Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh, said that today's talks will broach three key issues, including the level of the dialogue, Israeli terrorism against the intifadah [uprising], and the international conference. These are the issues on the Palestinian agenda.

In his statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, PLO Executive Committee member (for the DFLP) Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh said that the Palestinian side will raise the three issues, namely:

Raising the level of dialogue between the two sides and recognizing the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative;

Raising the need for the United States to exert greater pressure on Israel to curb its repressive practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, especially in view of escalating Israeli terrorism and the death of further innocent victims at the hands of the occupation army;

And reactivating U.S. moves with a view to convening an international conference under UN auspices, which the parties concerned would attend and in which the Security Council's five permanent member states would participate.

In his statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh added that the Maghribiyah House meeting between the Palestinian delegation—which, apart from 'Abd Rabbuh, includes both Palestinian Ambassador in Tunis Hakam Bal'awi and PLO Political Department Director 'Abd al-Latif Abu Hijlah—and the U.S. delegation comprising U.S. Ambassador to Tunis Robert Pelletreau and the embassy's political counselor—will broach other issues to be raised by the Palestinian side. These will include the Israeli raids on Palestinian camps and positions in Lebanon. The Palestinian side will also stress that U.S. procrastination in adopting practical positions will not facilitate the dialogue's continuation, as long as new victims are claimed daily and Israel's principal ally fails to use its strong influence to end this.

Within the same context, other Palestinian sources that spoke to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT expect the U.S. side to submit a new proposal on the Middle East problem, especially after the U.S. Administration's talks with several circles concerned with the situation, the latest of which were with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, who visited the United States where he heard U.S. officials stressing the need for Israel to adopt practical stances to facilitate a solution to the conflict. He was also made aware of the U.S. commitment to the resumption of the dialogue with the PLO.

The sources said that they do not expect the U.S. side to raise the question of easing the intifadah in the occupied territories, because the PLO position on the issue is clear and unequivocal, as long as Israeli continues its occupation of the land.

In answer to a question from AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, one Palestinian leader said that it was too early to comment on reports published Monday by the Israeli paper HA'ARETZ indicating that the United States would ask the PLO to authorize the Palestinians in the occupied territories to negotiate with Israel a special temporary agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in return for its direct participation in the negotiations on the occupied territories' ultimate status, even though the PLO position—namely, that the PLO will decide who should represent it in any negotiations or talks with any party—is known and has been emphasized on several occasions. [passage omitted]

Commentary on Dialogue

LD2403221189 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 24 Mar 89

[Station commentary: "After the Resumption of the Dialogue"]

[Text] Brothers, the dialogue—that is, the U.S. Administration's talking to the PLO—is not an end in itself, but it is a reasonable introduction to a path along which we might be able to formulate a just and peaceful settlement of the basic aspect of the Middle East problem—the Palestinian problem.

If there are no clear bases for the necessary aim of the dialogue shared by both parties, the dialogue will be a waste of time and futile.

Since it is assumed that states do not waste their time and do not send representatives here or there just for fun or for an exchange of toasts, there is near conviction in broad quarters of the Arab world that the U.S. aim in the dialogue is not much different from Shamir's aim in rejecting it—to distract international public opinion from the terrorist practices of the Zionist occupation army and the Zionist terrorist settlers against our people in the occupied territories on the one hand, and on the other hand to distract the Arabs and Palestinians themselves from the uprising and the means to consolidate and develop it because of possible disagreements about whether to resume the dialogue. Disagreements about one word here or a phrase there, until the enemy and its allies find a loophole through which they can escape from the psychological, economic, and propaganda effects of the continuing uprising on the Zionist entity.

However, the majority of the observers do not rule out that the U.S. Administration might to some extent have awakened to the fact that its complete submission to Zionist blackmail will, in the long run, cause severe damage to U.S. interests in the Arab world. Therefore, the continuation of the Arab-Zionist conflict carries real dangers to these interests in the economic, political, and strategic fields.

In order to assure that the resumption of the dialogue does not mean a resumption of the maneuvers against the Palestinian uprising, the United States, if it is sincere, should prove its sincerity and seriousness by announcing its readiness to recognize the right of our Palestinian people to self-determination and establish a free and independent state on our land. Without this recognition, the only firm thing in the U.S. Middle Eastern policy will be its previous promises to the Zionist entity not to agree to an independent state for our Palestinian people. This would prove the accusations that the U.S. Administration is trying to manipulate us.

Hurani on U.S. Dialogue, Palestinian Issues

JN2603203989 Kuwait AL-ANBA' in Arabic 24 Mar 89 pp 22, 23

[Interview with PLO Executive Committee member 'Abdallah Hurani by Mustafa Badr, Sawsan Abu Husayn, and Usamah al-Dalil in Cairo—date not given]

[Excerpts] [AL-ANBA'] Why have you been excluded from the second Palestinian-U.S. dialogue?

[Hurani] It was not an exclusion at all. In light of the size of the U.S. delegation, we have found out that there was no need for two PLO Executive Committee members in the Palestinian delegation in addition to our ambassador and the director general of the PLO's Political Department. Therefore, our delegation was more than enough. [passage omitted]

[AL-ANBA'] Reports confirm the existence of a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue through France and that Mitterrand and Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] will hold a meeting in Cairo to discuss the issue. How true is this information?

[Hurani] Reports on Abu 'Ammar's forthcoming meeting with President Mitterrand in Cairo were not surprising. It was announced months ago that the meeting would take place. However, the meeting itself cannot be an alternative to the PLO's demand that brother Abu 'Ammar pay an official visit to Paris to meet with President Mitterrand. Regarding the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue, there are neither mediation efforts nor indirect dialogue.

Palestinian-Israeli dialogues are usually held within the framework of seminars or conferences abroad like the seminar that was organized by the AL-FAJR newspaper in the United States and that ended several days ago. The other forms of dialogue held between the PLO and the Israelis are those that take place between Palestinians in the occupied territories and Israeli parliamentary figures, journalists, or intellectuals. The PLO is not far from these contacts. In other words, it is trying to hold, allow, and follow up such contacts.

[AL-ANBA'] What about reports that the Soviet Union is ready to host a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue?

[Hurani] We do not fear the peace process or dialogue with any side. It is the Israeli side that fears and avoids the dialogue. We are prepared to hold a dialogue at any time, but the Israeli side rejects all forms of dialogue with the PLO.

[AL-ANBA'] Why does the PLO give great weight to the dialogue with the United States while it belittles the dialogue with the Soviet Union and Western Europe?

[Hurani] The meeting that took place with Shevardnadze in Cairo is viewed by the PLO and the Soviet Union as the most important of all meetings. In fact, Palestinian-Soviet relations have never before reached such coordination. Contacts take place every week, and we hold consultations and exchange views. Therefore, we view consultations and coordination with the Soviet friends as very important. On Europe's role, we always stress that Europe should play a major role in the peace process. It is the Israeli and U.S. sides that want to exclude the Europeans. We reiterate that we as well as the Soviet Union are seeking an active European role.

With respect to the Arab role, we were the ones who put forth the idea of the five-member committee, which the USSR later adopted. The USSR adopted this idea from the PLO and submitted it to the Arab countries. Our brothers in Egypt recall that we had submitted this idea to them. They welcomed this idea, but said that this matter does not depend on them alone. We also submitted it to Jordan. This idea is still under discussion. We always took care to submit this idea. The Soviet side recently informed us that Syria and Jordan have agreed to this dialogue. However, the Syrians now say that they did not say they agreed to the idea.

The same applies to the idea of an Arab summit. We were very eager to hold such a summit. The brothers in Egypt were also as eager as us. This summit must be held specifically to discuss the Palestinian cause, as it is impermissible that international groupings and blocs express their concern over the Palestinian cause and voice their support for it while the Arab side does not allot it the attention it deserves.

[AL-ANBA'] Let us say that the wager on the U.S. stand is important. What we fear is that it may be a losing wager. What do you have to say to this?

[Hurani] First of all, politically speaking, the PLO was not born yesterday. It is aware of the dimensions of this matter from all its aspects. If one notices sometimes that the PLO allots importance to the dialogue with the United States, this is because no one can deny that the United States plays a basic role and because the dialogue between the PLO and the United States was suspended in the past. That is why the PLO allots importance to the dialogue with the United States. But we will not just wager on the dialogue with the United States and cancel the other roles. This is something we can never do.

[AL-ANBA'] Why don't we hear about the physical aspects of the establishment of the state as much as we do about the scenarios of the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue?

[Hurani] The PLO has not forgotten this issue. There is more than one committee that was formed for this purpose. For example, the issue of water is one of the problems that will be discussed at the international conference. There are committees that are preparing files on the question of water, refugees, security, land, and the properties of absentees. We are preparing for these issues so that they may be submitted, first to the international conference, even before the establishment of the state.

Other issues are being discussed with some European countries. There are projects that are being prepared so that they may be implemented whether following the establishment of the state, or even before the establishment if the Israeli occupation authorities allow them to be implemented.

[AL-ANBA'] Are there substitutes for the Syrian stand on the five-member committee?

[Hurani] The Syrian side announced that it rejects this matter. The Jordanian side is not that enthusiastic about the matter. It is not against it but believes that it is still premature to discuss it at this stage, or to hold a meeting on it. This leaves Egypt and the Palestinians. The two sides are coordinating their stands on this matter. They are holding contacts and consultations even with respect to the preparation of the papers that will be submitted at the international conference.

As for having other parties join this committee, we are all members in the Arab League and the agreements we reach during bilateral, tripartite, four-sided, or five-sided meetings, we will ultimately submit to all Arabs. Therefore, we will adopt a collective Arab stand that will support the parties that will participate in the international conference.

On the other hand, we have an Arab seven-man committee comprised of the foreign ministers of seven Arab states. It will make moves this or the following month. The committee will tour the UN Security Council's permament member nations. In addition to the seven ministers, the Arab League secretary general also sits on the committee. Three of the Arab states on the committee are current members of the UN Security Council. Thus the Arabs are involved in preparing the international conference. [passage omitted]

As for the dialogues, there is an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue involving nationalist Palestinian forces residing inside the occupied land. The PLO is not unconnected with these dialogues. Each of these dialogues results in the Palestinian side telling the Israelis your government has no choice but to talk to the PLO and go to the international conference. We understand that the Israeli side and maybe the American Administration, or part of it at any rate, are betting on the dialouge or even encouraging it. In each of these dialogues, the proposed elections in the West Bank and Gaza come up.

Israel still counts on engaging Palestinians from inside the occupied land in dialogue rather than the PLO. Israel seems to think that if it persists in this line it might prove that these are the representatives of the Palestinian people. Israel would like to prove that the Palestinian cause concerns just the West Bank and Gaza and that the PLO remains outside the picture.

The Israelis bring up the subject of the elections in order to promote representatives for the West Bank and Gaza Strip and hold negotiations with them. Our people inside the occupied land are aware of Israeli thinking and that the Israelis will pursue this approach, as indeed will the Americans. They seek to drive a wedge between the Palestinians inside the occupied land and those living abroad and thus split the Palestinian people. The road would then be open for them to search for a substitute Palestinian leadership for the PLO. We are confident that our people will abort this Israeli bet.

[AL-ANBA'] Some observers of the Middle East scene are tempted to draw a parallel between the proposals put forward by Al-Sadat and those of the PLO. What do you think?

[Hurani] Abu 'Ammar has offered to go to Israel subject to unanimous Arab endorsement of the visit. As for Al-Sadat, he took only his own counsel before going to Jerusalem. He never consulted anyone. Even the Palestinian peace decision or any document that the PLO may sign will be the subject of consultations with the Arabs. This is because, when the PLO says ours is a pan-Arab cause, it means what it says. [passage omitted]

[AL-ANBA'] How important is Syria to the Palestinians?

[Hurani] We want to normalize our relations with Syria. Syria is an Arab country concerned with the Arab-Israeli conflict and must be part of any coordination on the conflict with Israel. The PLO has, on its side, all along sought normal, brotherly ties with Syria based on mutual respect and equality as well as independent Palestinian decisionmaking and support for the line pursued by the PLO. Our Arab brethren and Soviet friends are welcome to exert their good offices, and we are still waiting for the Syrian response.

PLO 'Source' on International Conference

JN2403170689 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1600 GMT 24 Mar 89

[Text] The PLO has affirmed that the international conference is the only acceptable framework to discuss a just peace in the Middle East in order to achieve the Palestinian people's rights, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of their own independent state on their national soil. This came in a statement made by a responsible source in the PLO and carried by WAFA in Tunis last night.

The source added that the PLO adheres to the option of international legitimacy, which was recognized by the Arab and Islamic summit conferences and the nonaligned countries. The successive Palestine National Council sessions approved this through adherence to the option of the UN-sponsored international conference to be attended by the five permanent Security Council member states and all the parties invloved, foremost of which is the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

PLO Prepares 5-Year State Development Plan

JN2703195589 Cairo UKTUBAR in Arabic 26 Mar 89 p 9

[Text] The PLO leadership has begun to prepare the first 5-year development plan for the new Palestinian state. Preliminary estimates indicate that the appropriations will amount to $12 billion. The plan includes projects aimed at providing water for agricultural purposes, especially since Israel has taken 90 percent of the subterranean waters in the West Bank and Gaza as well as a considerable part of the waters of the Jordan River.

Under the plan, an advanced industry will be established and houses for 3 million Palestinians will be built. This was stated by Nabil Sha'th, Yasir 'Arafat's political adviser.

Algeria

Citizens' UK Entry Problems Subject of Talks

LD2703091889 Algiers APS in Arabic 0825 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] London 27 Mar, (APS)—Being sensitive toward everything which harms the dignity of its citizens wherever they may be in the world the Algerian Government has followed with great concern the treatment of Algerian citizens at British airports and ports, particularly the issue of refusing them entry to British territory.

Within this framework an Algerian delegation, including a number of high officials from the Foreign Ministry and the Interior and Enviornment Ministry, paid a 3-day visit to London for talks with British authorities on issues concerning the movement of people between the two countries, particularly the issue of refusing entry to Algerian citizens. In accordance with the principle of reciprocity followed by the two countries since Algeria's independence, the two countries' citizens are not required to furnish an entry visa.

However, in the past few years and particularly since 1987, we have noticed an increase in the number of Algerian citizens who are denied entry to Britain and who are subjected to some disturbing treatment, i.e. interrogating and deporting them in front of other travellers as well as being held in "centers" where some are deprived of their freedom for up to 3 days waiting for a plane to bring them back to Algiers.

Among the 150,000 Algerian passengers flown by Air Algerie in 1988, 662 of them were not allowed to enter British soil. The British authorities presented Air Algerie with a 130,000 pounds sterling bill for costs of "detention" before deportation. What is more, the cost per night per Algerian citizen in a detention center is higher than the price of a luxury hotel room, i.e. more than 120 pounds sterling. Then there are the costs paid for transporting the police who accompany these people.

All Algerian citizens bound for Britain have valid passports, return tickets and enough money for living expenses. These criteria are good enough throughout the whole world.

Consequently, Algerian passengers can find no justification whatsoever for this kind of deportation, hence their sensitivity and the protest voiced by Algerian authorities.

To find appropriate means to put an end to this dispute, the Algerian delegation has responded to the invitation of the British Government. The talks conducted enabled both sides to learn about the concerns of each side and to discuss ways to normalize relations between the two countries in the field of peoples' movement.

Social Liberal Party Formed; Objectives Noted

LD2503203689 Algiers Domestic Service in French 1800 GMT 25 Mar 89

[Text] A new association with a political character has been set up: the Social Liberal Party. The provisional secretariat consists of Khalil Ahmed, a lawyer; Dr Arezki Nait Chabane; Prof (?Oukid Arezki); and Miss Boukhatem Fatiha. The association's objectives include a return to the original FLN [National Liberation Front] and the defense of women's rights and all aspects of Algerian culture.

Posts Trade Union, Government Reach Agreement

LD2503221589 Algiers Domestic Service in French 1800 GMT 25 Mar 89

[Text] The PTT [Posts and Telecommunications] national trade union is urgently calling on all its workers to return to work as of today. An agreement on the various points regarding the workers' claims was concluded at a meeting held today at the headquarters of the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Affairs, chaired by the minister of labor and in the presence of the PTT minister. Detailed information on the agreement will be published tomorrow for the benefit of all workers.

Trade Unions Refuse To Discuss Reform Project

LD2703161189 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 0630 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Two days ago, the General Union of Algerian Workers Nation Council held an emergency meeting at the National Maritime Club to discuss the latest developments in the national arena and the future of the trade union movement in Algeria.

Following this session, the council issued a statement in which it indicated that after reviewing the proposed dossier on trade unions, which defines the kinds, types, and categories of trade unions in accordance with Article 53 of the Constitution, the council refuses to discuss this draft project. The council states that male and female workers, who form the main basis, have the right to define the future of their trade union through an all-embracing discussion involving all units and sectors, in order to lay down a perception for the future of the trade union and define its objectives freely and democratically within the framework of a large-scale program that should be implemented soon.

Concerning the strikes and work stoppages, the statement indicates that the council hails the responsible spirit, the political maturity, and the national spirit expressed by all workers in all situations. The council stresses that at the end of the day these strikes and stoppages serve neither the interests of workers nor the national economy because of the lack of responsibility, incompetence, and Satanic maneuvers by some officials and leaders.

With regard to purchasing power, the council is convinced that this purchasing power should be protected and improved in all cases; namely, during the economic revival period, in that this represents a decisive element to reactivate and revive the economy.

Egypt

Mubarak Said Ready To Host Israel-PLO Dialogue

JN2703182289 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 26 Mar 89 p 1

[Excerpt] Cairo—AL-ITTIHAD has learned that Egyptian President Husni Mubarak has informed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir of Cairo's readiness to host a high level Palestinian-Israeli dialogue between Israeli Government officials and PLO officials.

Informed political sources in Cairo also said that this proposal was stated in the message Mubarak sent to Shamir several days ago. The message was carried to the prime minister by Israeli Science and Development Minister 'Ezer Weizman, who visited Cairo last week and met with President Mubarak. [passage omitted]

Urges International Conference

TA2603052789 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0500 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Text] Egypt's President Husni Mubarak says his country is committed to peace with Israel. The message was conveyed in a note that Cabinet Minister 'Ezer Weizman delivered to Prime Minister Shamir after Weizman returned from Cairo.

The Egyptian leader again called on Israel to participate in an international conference at which the PLO would also play a role.

Prime Minister Shamir will reply to Mubarak's message in the next few days.

Mubarak on Ties With Israel, Possible Visit

TA2603101289 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0625 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Report on interview with President Husni Mubarak in Ismailia on 22 March by Aharon Barne'a; Barne'a in Hebrew over Mubarak remarks in Arabic—recorded]

[Text] We asked President Mubarak: What is the uniqueness of the past 10 years and how do you perceive the next 10 years?

In the 10 years to come, Mubarak said, I wish Israel would do what we have done so far so that we may be free to turn to development. We have turned to development, while you continue to fight with part of the Palestinians—and we do not like that. Civilians die on your side and theirs. Does this make sense? Is that the job of leaders? To waste our money on missiles, cannons, and bullets, on killing and bloodshed?

Were we to spend this money on cooperation, construction, and development, it seems to me that the citizens would enjoy stability and people would live safely, knowing that nobody would kill them as soon as they stepped outside their doorstep—that they would be able to meet Arabs and cooperate with them. We would do everything quietly, we would launch joint projects, we would produce together, we would agree on cooperation in exports. We would live, he said, whereas today we are killing the next generations.

When we asked the Egyptian president about Egypt's role in the process in the future, he said: We are helping and assisting, but you are not following through. What else can we do for you? Will anybody kill you if you sit in an international conference? As for the question of negotiations with the PLO, you should not exercise yourselves on this issue. We will sit with the PLO yet, we will sit with it. Were I able to tell you sincerely that a solution can be reached without the PLO, I would say so. We have no intention of fooling you; there is no need to set each other up. The PLO is everywhere. The Palestinians in your midst will not stop what they are doing of their own volition as long as they see hope. When they start conducting negotiations with you... [Barne'a changes thought]

Believe me, I am afraid of saying anything so that you do not say later that I am instigating them. No, they will not conduct negotiations with you on their own. Believe me, and listen to my words—I know what I am saying: There is no incitement on the part of anybody. We must understand each other, sit together in order to find a solution. You keep on saying no, we will not sit with them. You must negotiate now.

The situation has changed, Mubarak said. From 1947 until recently, the Arabs always rejected and said no to every Israeli proposal. Now it is you who have changed; you have become like the Arabs of the past. Now it is we who say yes, and you are the ones who say no. We can continue to say yes and you can continue to say no for 40 years, and begin to agree 40 years hence. But let us shorten the way, gentlemen, let us be realistic.

When we asked Mubarak about a possible meeting with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir which may remove the obstacles, Mubarak had a clear answer: Are you asking me? You should ask him. With all due respect to Mr Shamir, I proposed visiting him if this would help solve the problem. The next day the new U.S. President said he was ready to board a plane and go to Israel if this would help accelerate the process, but noted that serious preparations must be made before such a move—just like I said. What was the reaction to my proposal?

A statement made in Israel saying no to an international conference. I told myself: This means they do not want me to come. The following day there was another statement saying Israel would not concede any territories. Then I told myself: What next? What happened next was that the Israeli press wrote: We will not pay a price for the third time in exchange for a visit by President Mubarak. Now you want me to come and you say that you would welcome me, but you say no to this, no to that, and no to the other thing. So what should I do? Come to Israel to sip coffee and tea?

Let us be sensible, Mubarak said, we want to live in reality. Let us not make laughingstocks of ourselves; we must sit together until we reach a solution. There are certain psychological problems on our side. So let us agree on an umbrella as an external element. The entire world agrees to it; you are the only ones who do not. Let us have an umbrella, an international umbrella. Let us break the psychological barrier. Let us sit together, prepare, and talk to each other.

We asked him: Will you be going to Washington next month with this international umbrella? You will arrive there before Yitzhaq Shamir. Perhaps the Americans will once again mediate to bring the positions closer.

Mubarak's reply: The Americans will pressure neither Israel nor Egypt. How can they bring the positions closer if we are not prepared to understand each other? How can we ask the Americans to help us? Well, let them help us only after we have arrived at an understanding; when things get tangled up, they can come to our help and unravel the situation. What happens is that you are on one side while the entire world is on the other.

Peace? I do not know what to tell you about it, Mubarak said. This peace is an important and immense thing, with incalculable value. The value of peace to future generations, to your son and grandchild, to your brother and daughter—you are making them live with anxiety and fear. The time has come, the Egyptian president said, to forget these fears and anxieties. Let us not rack our brains. I am not talking about anybody in specific, but I say: Gentlemen, get going, we have a golden opportunity this year to move toward peace. If we miss this opportunity, nobody, but nobody, will be able to guarantee what will follow.

Al-Baz on Ties With Israel

TA2603112489 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0845 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Report on interview with Usamah al-Baz, chairman of President Husni Mubarak's office for political affairs, by correspondent Aharon Barne'a in Cairo "last week"; Al-Baz remarks in English—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Baz] The beginning of the peace process was a difficult one; it was not easy. I know that many Israelis expected more of peace than they found because they thought that overnight, simply because Israel returned back to Egypt the Sinai, the Egyptians will be overjoyed and that this newly created euphoria would result into opening the houses of every Egyptian, opening the hearts of every Egyptian to the Israelis and peace with Israel. That was unrealistic....

[Barne'a translates and continues] This was unrealistic in many respects because the establishment of deep relations between individuals and nations is a process that takes time. The obstacles that existed for some 50 years are not insurmountable, since this hostility and hatred between Israelis and Arabs are a new phenomenon. It takes time to remove these obstacles. Some of them were removed during Al-Sadat's visit and when we signed the Camp David accords and the peace treaty as part of a comprehensive arrangement, but there is no doubt that other obstacles exist. On the other hand, certain moves and political positions taken by Israel did not help create the right atmosphere for the establishment of warmer and more easygoing relations between Israelis and Egyptians.

[Al-Baz] What I have here in mind is the fact that several statements they made to the effect that Israel is not going to move on the Palestinian issue, that Israel cannot make any territorial compromise and they are going to say that there will be no going back to this—that gave the message to the Egyptians that some Israeli politicians within the Israeli establishment wanted to get Egypt out of the dispute and maintain their occupation of the Arab territories in the West Bank and Gaza. Many of their statements, even vis-a-vis Egypt, the prolongation of the dispute over Tabah....

[Barne'a translates and continues] Many of the statements concerning Egypt, the prolongation of the argument about Tabah, which was an unnecessary difficulty; statements that were insensitive to Egyptian public opinion; as well as Israel's behavior, such as the invasion of Lebanon; the way in which it spoke about other Arab countries; the open hostility toward Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war; Irangate—all these created the impression that the Israelis are in the area in order to weaken the Arabs wherever they are, and that Israel sees its own interests as conflicting with those of the Arabs without giving any consideration to the facts.

For example, one of those facts was that Iraq was not hostile to Israel, at least no more than Iran was. This combination of acts, words, and statements by Israeli leaders did not help and are still not helping with regard to the way many Egyptians perceive the establishment of positive relations between the two countries. Nevertheless, the peace we began implementing through Al-Sadat's visit and the signing of the Camp David accords and the peace treaty has withstood many challenges—and this is very important. Peace has withstood numerous and difficult tests.

[Al-Baz] Egypt has elected to seek peace because we thought that this would be better for all of us, and this is the way of the future. President al-Sadat was a visionary in this sense, because he was looking to the future; he was looking ahead, years ahead. But we believe that his vision was right. We share this vision of his; President Mubarak shares it from the very beginning and we still share it, that peace is the real challenge for all of us, and we should accept that challenge, despite....

[Barne'a translates and continues] We must accept that challenge in spite of the criticism and numerous problems that many people see in the peace treaty. In spite of it all, we still believe that we are in a far better situation today than we were 10 or 15 years ago.

As for the future, two things must be done: Expanding the circle of peace to include the Palestinians, the Jordanians, and the Syrians. When that is done, other Arab countries will join the peace circle, since the Iraqis, Kuwaitis, Algerians, and Moroccans will no longer have any dispute with Israel.

[Al-Baz] I am not saying that the existence of the Israelis poses a danger to us. It doesn't pose any danger. What posed a certain danger in the past and what still can pose a certain danger in the future would be certain policies of confrontation, policies of hardliners, or hawkish elements that believe that the best way to solve problems is to resort to the use of sheer force. And this we are opposed to.

[Barne'a translates and continues] We tried to take matters a little farther with Al-Baz, by posing the following question: What do you propose to President Mubarak, seeing that the Israeli Government does not want to talk to the PLO? Al-Baz's reply: We believe Israel must conduct negotiations with representatives of the Palestinian people who were elected by the Palestinians. Clearly, the PLO is the representative of the Palestinian people. No other organization is as authentic or as genuine a representative as the PLO. Other organizations claim to represent part of the Palestinians, but these are splinter groups operating under the control of external elements. Any impartial observer would determine that the PLO is the organization that enjoys the overwhelming majority of the Palestinians, who regard them as their representative, symbol, and banner.

The most important thing is the following, Al-Baz said: You can justly say that you will not negotiate with such an organization if it objects to coexistence between the two peoples, the Palestinian and the Israeli. But, seeing that the PLO has accepted the conditions for peace—which we believe are sufficient to include it in the process at this point—I would say that no Israeli Government should hesitate and that the Israeli Government must change its position on the matter.

Referring to elections in the territories, Al-Baz said: If elections are held, those elected would be people who would operate under the PLO's orders and banner. Thus, you would be wasting precious time and vast effort, seeing that ultimately you would arrive at the same situation as exists today. Why do such a thing, just to find people prepared to conduct negotiations in good faith? Such people already exist. The PLO has changed its position and has said that it is prepared to negotiate.

[Al-Baz] We appeal to the Israeli public opinion—I am not saying to take the risk because the risk is much less than the risk that exists today—but we appeal to every Israeli to give peace a chance, to give it a try and say: Okay, let us sit down and let us hear what they want to say. Many Israelis fear the creation of a Palestinian state or a Palestinian entity. I would say that this fear is unwarranted. Don't judge by past behavior, because if we judge by past behavior....

[Barne'a translates and continues] Do not judge by past behavior, because if we were to judge by Israel's behavior in the past, the situation would also be grim. You must judge by what might happen in the future.

Envoy to Israel To Meet With 'Abd al-Majid

NC2803041689 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2310 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Excerpt] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Muhammad Basyuni, Egypt's ambassador in Israel, arrived in Cairo from Tel Aviv tonight for a short visit during which he will meet with Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister. [passage omitted]

Officials Prepare for Mubarak's U.S. Visit

NC2803114389 Cairo MENA in English 1120 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, March 28 (MENA)—Minister of Cabinet Affairs and of State for Administrative Development Dr. 'Atif 'Ubayd and State Minister for International Cooperation Dr. Maurice Makramallah left here today for Washington to prepare for the visit of President Husni Mubarak to the U.S. due to start on April 3.

Dr Makramallah said they will meet with representatives of the U.S. Treasury Department and the International Aid of the State Department, and assisting technical authorities of the Congress Committees chairmen, to arrange for the economic side of President Mubarak's talks.

'Abd al-Majid Meets With U.S. Delegation

NC2703174189 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1630 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has emphasized the importance of giving an impetus to the peace process in the Middle East and of exploiting the positive stands of the PLO and world support for convening the international conference for peace in order to establish a just and durable peace in the region. He pointed out that it is important that the United States should play a role in giving an impetus to the peace process.

'Abd al-Majid said this during a meeting he held today with the delegation of a U.S. Congress subcommittee for defense, which is currently in Cairo.

Bilateral relations were discussed during the meeting. 'Abd al-Majid explained that the main goal of President Mubarak's visit to the United States next week is to give an impetus to the peace process.

Liberal Party Criticizes U.S. Aid Decision

PM2303162689 Cairo AL-AHRAR in Arabic
20 Mar 89 p6

[Liberal Party Statement: "Liberal Party Leadership Council: We Support President Mubarak and Condemn the U.S. Position"]

[Text] The Liberal Party Leadership Council, under party leader Mustafa Kamil Murad, has expressed its full support for President Mubarak's efforts during his recent successful tour of Brussels, The Hague, Bonn, and Paris, where he had summit talks, renewed severed contacts, and established direct links based on logic, common interests, mutual understanding, and cooperation between Egypt and the world's largest economic grouping, namely, the European Common Market.

The council praised the president's support for the Palestinian cause and the international peace conference.

The council denounced the strange U.S. position on the suspension of financial aid to Egypt, in view of the campaign of criticism and the hostile activity that some are trying to establish internationally to undermine the president's tour or affect its results, on the pretext of the chemical weapons issue, at a time when Egypt is demanding and urging that funds allocated to armaments be redircted to development.

The council congratulated the Egyptian people and the Arabs on the return of Egyptian Tabah and on Egyptian diplomacy's success in the interests of peace, development, and political, social, and economic stability.

The party leadership council held its meeting at 1200 hours Wednesday at the party's central offices in 'Abidin. It was attended by deputy party leader Major General Salah al-Rifa'i; party secretaries Muhammad Murad al-Subtasi, Al-Hamzah Di'bis, Muhib Hasan Habib, and Sami Anis Luqa; Mahmud Fawzi, adviser to the party leader; Wahid Ghazi, AL-AHRAR chief editor; and assistant party general secretaries Hilmi Salim, Shafiq Jad, and Muhammad Farid Zakariya.

The council reviewed the internal and external situations as well as important current affairs and the important decisions and recommendations made by political party leaders at their ongoing meetings in connection with preparations for the 30 March conference in Tanta city, Al-Sharqiyah Governorate, and coordination among the opposition parties on constitutional amendments and reforms.

[Signed] Hilmi Salim, party secretary.

Saudi Arabia's King Fahd Pays Visit 27 Mar

Arrives in Cairo

NC2703141589 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1404 GMT
27 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—His Majesty King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, and his accompanying delegation, arrived in Cairo from Baghdad at 1600 today for a 4-day visit to Egypt.

President Muhammad Husni Mubarak met King Fahd at the airport.

Salutes Egypt, Al-Azhar

NC2703162389 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1513 GMT
27 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—King Fahd ibn 'Abd Al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy shrines, made the following statement:

Today I have arrived in the blessed land of Egypt, and I would like to express to my brother, His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, on behalf of the Saudi Government and people, our most sincere feelings of friendship and appreciation. I also salute sisterly Egypt, its government and people, on my behalf and that of my accompanying delegation, for the mutual feelings of friendship that were borne out in the warmth of today's reception.

It was no surprise to us to be met with warmth in a country with which we share common bonds of religion, kinship, language, and destiny. We can hardly find the words to express the depth of our common heritage.

Egypt has a great history of civilization and culture. Egypt may always take pride in its men of knowledge and religion who propagated the values and tenets of Islam and established the everlasting glory of the faith by their words and deeds.

Throughout history, Egypt has been a shining beacon and Al-Azhar has tirelessly disseminated knowledge and emanated wisdom in the width and breadth of the Islamic world. Al-Azhar, God willing, will continue to perform its mission, particularly as the Islamic nation is faced with new challenges. The Islamic nation has to exert continued efforts to confront the designs and plots being hatched against our faith and most cherished beliefs.

Mubarak Discusses Lebanon

NC2703162989 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1542 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Following the official welcome ceremony accorded to King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy shrines, at Al-Qubbah Palace, President Husni Mubarak told journalists that the events in Lebanon spell the worst of disasters for the Arab world.

Answering a question about the situation in Lebanon, President Mubarak said: We call on the Arab world and the international community to put an end to the massacres in Lebanon. Our slogan has always been "hands off Lebanon" and we are not going to change it. We do not say slogans and then change them, Mubarak said.

Mubarak on King's Visit

NC2703180189 Cairo MENA in English 1738 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, March 27 (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak welcomed today the visit by the custodian of the two holy mosques King Fahd of Saudi Arabia.

This came in a briefing by Minister of Information Safwat al-Sharif following President Mubarak's meeting with Saudi newspapers chief editors.

Al-Sharif also said that President Mubarak underscored the depth of relations bonding Egyptian and Saudi peoples along history expressing the Egyptian people's happiness to have today King Fahd among them.

President Mubarak also stressed that contacts between the two countries were never discontinued even during the most critical circumstances, Al-Sharif said.

The minister said that President Mubarak underlined, during his meeting with the Saudi newspapers chief editors, that his meeting with King Fahd envisaged consultation and exchange of viewpoints on Arab and Islamic issues.

Mubarak, King Exchange Awards

NC2703210289 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2030 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak and King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia, custodian of the two holy mosques, exchanged the highest decorations during the banquet that was held tonight in honor of King Fahd and the delegation accompanying him. President Mubarak presented King Fahd with the Sash of the Nile, the highest Egyptian award, and King Fahd conferred the King 'Abd al-'Aziz medal, the highest in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on President Mubarak.

Mubarak Speaks at Dinner

NC2803040089 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2109 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Speech by President Husni Mubarak at a banquet at 'Abidin Palace in Cairo in honor of Saudi King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz on 27 March—recorded]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. My Brother, Your Majesty King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques: In appreciation of the eternal ties between the two fraternal peoples of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Arab Republic of Egypt; in confirmation of Arab-Islamic solidarity, which is expressed in the spirit of the strong relations between our countries; in expression of the welcome of the Arab people of Egypt for your visit; and out of pride in your support for them and for their causes, I am pleased to confer on you, in the name of Arab Egypt, its people, and leaders, the great Sash of the Nile. It is the highest award of the state. May God grant us success in serving the goals of our great nation and bolster its bright future, under its faithful leaders and through the sacrifices of its honest sons. Thank you. [applause]

King Fahd Speaks at Dinner

NC2803042089 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2111 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Speech by Saudi King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud at a banquet given in his honor by President Husni Mubarak in 'Abidin Palace in Cairo on 27 March—recorded]

[Text] Peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you. Mr President, my respected brothers: On this blessed night, which was made possible by the president and leaders of dear Egypt who invited me to visit their country, it is hard for me to express the feelings that the government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and I have for Egypt.

Relations between the Egyptian and Saudi peoples and leaders have long been strong in our hearts and minds, despite any insignificant difficulties. These ties will last forever, God willing.

To conclude, I thank his excellency the president for according me this award, which I will cherish. Allow me, Mr President, to present you with the King 'Abd al-'Aziz medal, the highest medal of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Thank you, Mr President. [applause]

Talks With Saudis Open at Foreign Ministry

NC2703190789 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1852 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Talks between Egypt and Saudi Arabia opened tonight at the Foreign Ministry. Leading the Egyptian side was Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and leading the Saudi was Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal.

During the talks, the Egyptian and Saudi officials discussed ways of enhancing bilateral ties in all domains. They also discussed peace efforts on the Arab arena, the latest developments in the Gulf, and the Lebanese problem. Various regional and international issues of common concern were also reviewed during the talks.

Soviet Envoy on Peace Process, Disarmament

NC2403104089 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0735 GMT 24 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 24 Mar (MENA)—Soviet Ambassador in Cairo Kirillovich Zhuravlev has emphasized the need for taking practical steps to start the peace process in the Midlde East. In a statement to MENA, the Soviet ambassador said that Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, during his visit to Cairo in February, proposed convening a conference of the prime ministers of the UN Security Council member states to reach compromise solutions and consider the possibility of setting the peace process in motion.

The ambassador underlined the need to stimulate consultations among the five members of the UN Security Council and the various parties concerned with the Arab-Israeli conflict, referring to the Soviet proposals for the appointment of a special envoy of the UN secretary general for the Middle East.

Zhuravlev said that although the world's states are moving toward arms limitation, the reverse is taking place in the Middle East region, despite the fact that this region's states badly need to avoid the arms race and to devote themselves to development and their people's prosperity and progress. He affirmed that all the ideas presented by Shevardnadze during his visit to Egypt met with the Egyptian leadership's response and understanding.

Ambassador Zhuravlev emphasized that the Soviet Union propounded the idea of convening a meeting among the Arab states and parties concerned with the Arab-Israeli conflict—Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and the PLO—but that in practice this proposal has not yet crystallized. He also alluded to the importance of a united Arab stand. He said that the Soviet Union is mediating between Syria and the PLO, but that so far this mediation has not yielded any results.

The ambassador asserted that Shevardnadze's talks with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens resulted only in an agreement on a meeting of experts from the two countries, pointing out that there was no agreement between the Soviet official and his Israeli counterpart on the rest of the subjects that were discussed. Zhuravlev said that, during his tour of the Arab and Middle Eastern countries, Shevardnadze emphasized the Soviet Union's desire that the Arabs settle all the problems existing among them. He said that the disputes obstruct achieving a solution to the peace process in the Middle East region.

The Soviet ambassador said that, after his visit to the region, Shevardnadze reached the conclusion that the situation in the Middle East, with its present arms race, is not headed toward peace.

He said that the Soviet Union, as Minister Shevardnadze stated, is prepared to discuss all proposals related to the settlement of the conflict and the building of relations of confidence. The ambassador drew attention to the proposal presented by Shevardnadze during his visit to Egypt, which advocates rendering the Midle East reigon free of nuclear and chemical weapons and missiles. He said that the Middle East region now occupies third place in the world, after NATO and the Warsaw Pact states, with regard to arms stockpiling.

Three Soviet Delegations Arrive 20 Mar

NC2103054589 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2140 GMT 20 Mar 89

[Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—A Soviet delegation representing a group of companies that export to Egypt and led by Mr Malkin arrived in Cairo this evening on a visit to Egypt that will last several days.

Midhat al-Tunisi, director of Yasmina Company, welcomed the Soviet delegation on arrival. He stated that the Soviet delegation will sign a reciprocal deal worth 180 million sterling accounting pounds under which Egypt will export to the Soviet Union perfumes, perfume oils, and other beauty products in return for imported machinery, equipment, and spare parts.

A delegation of the Soviet Motor Transport and Highway Workers Union led by Mr Yuvnashov [spelling of name as received], chairman of the Central Committee of the Soviet Transport Workers Union, arrived this evening on a 1-week visit to Egypt.

During its visit, the delegation will hold talks with 'Asim 'Abd al-Haq, minister of manpower and training, and Ahmad al-'Amawi, chairman of the General Federation of Trade Unions, on ways to strengthen the relations between Egypt and the Soviet Union in the labor and transport fields.

Andrey Ruzov, [spelling of name as received] assistant Soviet deputy minister of the fish industry, also arrived in Cairo this evening at the head of a delegation on a 5-day visit to Egypt.

Muhammad al-Shinnawi, the director general of the Foreign Agreements Department in the General Authority for the Development of the Fish Industry, stated that the Soviet delegation's visit to Egypt comes as part of the effort to strengthen the relations between the two countries, particularly in the wake of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's visit to Cairo in Febraury. He noted in this regard the fishery agreement that has been in effect between the two countries since 1964. He said that the two sides will conclude an agreement on the importation of frozen fish and fishing equipment.

Mauritania

Egypt's Ghali Holds News Conference, Departs

AB2503181389 Nouakchott Domestic Service in French 0730 GMT 25 Mar 89

[Summary from poor reception] "The Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs left Nouakchott yesterday at the end of 3-day working visit to our country." Dr Butrus Ghali held talks with Cabinet members and top government officials.

"Before leaving Nouakchott, the Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs gave a press conference during which he spoke about his visit to our country and the prospects for cooperation between our two brotherly countries and various current Arab, African, and international issues. Concerning his visit to our country, Dr Butrus Butrus Ghali stressed the following: The outcome of my mission to Mauritania is very positive. I was received by the CMSN [Military Committee of National Salvation] chairman and head of state to whom I delivered a message from his Egyptian counterpart. I also had a series of talks with members of the government, and I met with the Egyptian community in Nouakchott. The purpose of my visit was, therefore, to examine the cooperation relations between our two brotherly countries in various fields. We aim to extend this cooperation to the commercial sector."

He also discussed strengthening south-south relations, north-south dialogue, and cooperation among Third World countries.

Morocco

UK Prime Minister Thatcher Arrives on Visit

LD2703132989 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Excerpt] British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, accompanied by her husband Mr Denis Thatcher, arrived at Marrakech-Menara Airport this afternoon on a visit to our country at the invitation of Moroccan Prime Minister Azzedine Laraki. In addition to Laraki, the airport welcoming party included a number of cabinet ministers, Abdeslam Znined, Moroccan ambassador in London; and Rabat William Shakespear, British ambassador to Morocco [title as heard]; members of the diplomatic corps of the Commonwealth countries in Morocco, Marrakech Governor Mohamed Belmahi, as well as a number of military and civilian personalities.

After taking the salute before the flag amid the playing of the British and Moroccan anthems, Thatcher inspected a detachment of the Royal Moroccan Air Force who saluted before the British prime minister. [passage omitted]

Holds Talks With King Hassan

LD2803102389 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] At the Royal Palace in Marrakech this evening, His Majesty King Hassan II received Mrs Margaret Thatcher, British prime minister, and held talks with her for 2 hours.

Concludes Visit, Departs

LD2803103389 Rabat MAP in Arabic 1003 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Marrakech, 28 Mar (MAP)—British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher left Morocco this morning, following an official visit during which she held talks with His Majesty King Hassan II.

Mrs Thatcher, who was accompanied by Moroccan Prime Minister Azzedine Laraki, inspected a Royal Moroccan Air Force honor guard which saluted her. Mrs Thatcher was seen off by a number of members of the Moroccan Government, Dr Mohamed Belmahi, his majesty's governor of Marrakech Province, the leader of Marrakech County Council, military and civilian officials from the municipality, and a number of dignitaries. Dr Azzedine Laraki accompanied the guest of Morocco to the stairs of the plane, where he saw her off.

It is worth recalling that Mrs Thatcher's visit to Morocco was characterized by the meeting granted to her by His Majesty King Hassan II, who held talks with her for 2 hours. He also gave a banquet in her honor yesterday.

Sudan

Al-Mahdi Calls on Garang To 'Coordinate'

EA2703170589 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1425 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Khartoum, 27 Mar (SUNA)—Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the prime minister, has addressed an appeal to Colonel John Garang to coordinate with the Peace Operations Room set up by the Council of Ministers on the basis of the Sudanese peace agreement signed on 16 November 1988. Al-Mahdi said he hoped to hear a positive decision from Garang, which would move the country toward peace.

In a statement to the Constituent Assembly today, Al-Mahdi said the government would give the peace issue priority status, particularly as the international and regional climate were dominating (?this). [sentence as received]

He appealed to the Eritreans to work for peace so that peace could prevail in Sudan and Ethiopia.

Al-Mahdi affirmed the decisions issued by the Council of Ministers yesterday with regard to the adoption of the phased program and an official peace initiative, and what this entailed in terms of establishing a [words indistinct] ministerial committee to contact the SPLM [Sudanese People's Liberation Movement]. His excellency said the peace process would go on simultaneously with the operation to defend the homeland.

Al-Mahdi said that the military-political talks and the trade union-political talks which had taken place [words indistinct] the conditions [words indistinct] confirmed the soundness of the democratic climate in Sudan. He said the actions (?taken) to form governments and their taking office in this new era had been to contain the changes which were taking place and were not maneuvers, as some thought.

Al-Mahdi referred in his address to the new government's program, including the vesting in the council of ministers' responsibility for the economic sector, and revising the supply plan so as to alleviate the problems of the masses, and the government's continued implementation of the 4-year plan.

Al-Mahdi said Sudan would continue its policy of nonalignment and [words indistinct], but the country was experiencing a deterioration of the economy, the cause of which lay in the May [Numayri] dictatorship era [word indistinct] (?act) with regard to its circumstances on the part of friends. In this respect, he expressed gratitude to Libya for helping Sudan. He also thanked the Arab funds, the Islamic Development Bank, China, and Japan for helping Sudan out of its crisis. [passage indistinct]

Al-Mahdi Appoints Council Head, Darfur Governor

NC2703192589 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1900 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Excerpt] Khartoum, 27 Mar (MENA)—Sudanese Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi issued a decision today appointing (Angelo Bida) as chairman of the Council of the South and (Paul David Biru) as deputy chairman and member of the council.

Al-Mahdi issued another decision appointing Dr al-Tijani al-Sis Muhammad as governor of Darfur Province. [passage omitted]

Defense Minister Views Role of Armed Forces

EA2703163289 Khartoum National Unity Radio in Arabic 1245 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] General Mubarak 'Uthman Rahmah, the defense minister, has stressed in a statement that the Armed Forces are vigilantly guarding the country's democratic system with strict and constant observance of the Constitution. The minister said the Armed Forces would always remain the trusted guardians of democracy and constitutional legality in the country by virtue of the Armed Forces' role of protecting national unity and territorial integrity.

The minister said he had been selected in accordance with the nationalist and independent qualities that characterize the post of defense minister. He would accordingly discharge his duties as defense minister in a spirit of pure patriotism and serve Sudan and the Armed Forces with total nationalism and respect and without fear or favor with regard to politics. He said that in this regard, he envisioned a strong army, which would receive every form of help and material and moral support to enable it to secure the country and its unity. The minister stressed the need to support the unity and coherence of the internal front.

Referring to the restoration of peace in the country, the minister said: Peace is one of the government's strategic objectives and steps taken to achieve peace will have no effect on the work of the Armed Forces inasmuch as peace is the objective of all without discrimination or capitulation. The minister expressed himself pleased with the confidence vested in him by the Armed Forces in being selected defense minister.

DUP Leader Al-Mirghani Departs for Libya 28 Mar

EA2703195289 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1430 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Khartoum, 27 Mar (SUNA)—Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party [DUP], will leave for the Libyan Jamahiriyah tomorrow at the invitation of the Libyan leader, Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. This was revealed today by Sayyid Ahmad al-Husayn, deputy secretary-general of the party, deputy prime minister, and foreign minister, who stressed that the invitation is within the framework of strengthening the relationship between the Arab brothers and consolidating the bonds of friendship with Libya, and noted that the position of the Libyan leadership had been clearly opposed to the May [Numayri] regime and that Libya continued to give Sudan support [words indistinct] democratic (?form).

Clergy Calls for Break in Ties With UK

EA2703182789 Khartoum National Unity Radio in Arabic 1245 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] The Society of Sudanese 'Ulema [body of professional Islamic theologians] has called on the government to break diplomatic relations with Britain, to expel the British ambassador from Khartoum, to boycott all British products, and to stop cooperating with British airlines in protest against the book by the apostate SalmanRushdie, "The Satanic Verses." This emerged during a press conference held by the society yesterday morning at Friendship Hall.

The news conference was addressed by Dr Ahmad 'Ali al-Imam, the society's chairman, who also called for the expulsion of the representative of the book's publishers, who is currently in Khartoum. Al-Imam said he had expected Britain to adopt a position vis-a-vis the writer and publisher within a legal framework and to bring an end to insults being directed against Muslims.

Bahrain

AL-AYYAM Cited on Interception of Yacht

JN2803085489 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0745 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Manama, 28 Mar (WAKH)—The Bahraini newspaper AL-AYYAM, published today, reported the full story behind the disappearance of the yacht, "Faylakah", in the Gulf last Thursday [23 March], which news agencies and newspapers have been dealing with over the past 2 days.

Shipping sources in the Gulf have told AL-AYYAM that Iranian naval vessels intercepted the "Faylakah" in the northern Gulf on Thursday when they observed a change in its course in a manner that suggested that it was heading toward the Iranian coast. The sources added that the Iranian Navy escorted the yacht to a nearby Iranian island where they interrogated the nine people on board for 2 hours. They were all then released and the yacht left Iranian territorial waters to an unspecified destination.

The sources explained that the "Faylakah" was en route from Dubai to Kuwait and that the incident took place hours before it entered Kuwaiti territorial waters. The sources asserted that the subject was closed after the yacht and those on board were eventually released on Thursday. They pointed out that the Iranian Navy held the yacht as a security precaution and that it was released after it became evident that there was no reason to hold it.

The sources said that the distress call sent by the "Faylakah" on Thursday, was heard by amateur fishing boats in Kuwait who reported the incident. However, the information obtained by these boats through the distress call was inaccurate, which suggested that it was a hoax call.

The sources declined to give any information regarding the destination of the "Faylakah" after it was released by the Iranian Navy. These sources denied press reports that a fire broke out on the yacht after the Iranian boats opened fired at it, pointing out that the information available to them confirms that no shooting took place during the incident.

Kuwait

Shaykh Sabah Departs for Arab League Meeting

LD2503115489 Kuwait KUNA in English 0948 GMT 25 Mar 89

[By Salih Nazzal]

[Excerpts] Kuwait, March 25 (KUNA)—Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad left here Saturday for Tunisia at the head of Kuwait's delegation to 91st session of the Arab League Council that opens there on Monday.

The Kuwaiti chief diplomat on Sunday will preside over a meeting for the League's committee of six on Lebanon to draft the final report that Shaykh Sabah will table on behalf of the committee with the council's meeting. The report is to include results that the committee reached following two stages of talks with Lebanese officials in Tunis and Kuwait. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Sabah is scheduled to meet in the Tunisian capital with a number of former Lebanese presidents and premiers prior to the council's conference. KUNA learned that former presidents Sulayman Franjiyah and Amin al-Jamayyil had accepted the invitation for talks with the committee as well as former premiers Sa'ib Salam, Dr. Amin al-Hafiz, Shafiq al-Wazzan and Rashid al-Sulh. Well informed sources said that ex-President Charles Helo had apologized due to his wife's health condition in addition to former Parliament Speaker Kamil al-As'ad.

Shaykh Sabah is accompanied by an official delegation grouping director of the Arab Nation's Department at the Foreign Ministry 'Abd al-Hamid al-Buayjan, Director of the Minister's Office Abdallah Sa'd al-Abdul Razak, advisor at the Council of Ministers Dr. Tuayma al-Jurf and Faruq al-Nouri from the legal department.

In Tunis, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Tunisia and its permanent representative with the Arab League 'Abd al-Mohsen Nasir al-Jiyan and to Syria Ahmad al-Jasim, who conveyed Shaykh Sabah's messages to Lebanese figures in Damascus and Beirut.

Al-'Usaymi on Iraqi Border, Arms Deals, Lebanon

JN2703122389 Kuwait AL-QABAS in Arabic 24 Mar 89 pp 1, 20

[By Ahmad 'Abd al-Majid]

[Excerpts] Sa'ud al-Usaymi, mister of state for foreign affairs, has described his highness the amir's call for easing Third World debts by lowering interest rates an initiative stemming from the heart of a believer who is aware of the extent of these states' suffering. [passage omitted]

In a meeting with an Egyptian press delegation on 22 March, the minister of state for foreign affairs denied any border problems between Kuwait and Iraq. He said the border between the two sisterly countries is settled on the ground and has not been specified on paper only. He said neither Kuwait nor Iraq consider this subject a current priority because there is neither aggression between the two countries nor border violations by either side.

Responding to questions posed by Egyptian journalists, Al-'Usaymi affirmed that Kuwait has never ceded an inch of its territory to any other country. He said rumors of Kuwaiti islands being leased to belligerents are baseless. He called on any journalist to visit any Kuwaiti area he selects to see that it is Kuwaiti 100 percent and that it has never been ceded.

The minister told the press delegation, which met with a number of Kuwaiti officials within its visit to Kuwait at the invitation of the Ministry of Information, that since independence Kuwait has been pursuing a policy of diversifying sources of weaponry. Therefore, he said, there is no connection between purchasing weapons from the Soviet Union and the U.S. Congress' obstruction of the F-4 aircraft deal. He said the opposite is absolutely correct. He explained that Kuwait studies the available weapons that serve its strategy and buys them from any source regardless of the policy of that country.

Al-'Usaymi said that the six-member committee entrusted with following up the Lebanese crisis is a sincere Arab effort led by Kuwait and its deputy prime minister and foreign minister. He said this committee will meet in Tunis on 27 March, in the hope that it will be able to continue its mission and to succeed in it. He said the committee is determined to achieve success, especially since all Lebanese factions want and seek a solution. He said the Lebanese religious leaders have proved that they harbor no hostilities against each other. Therefore, he said, there is no religious problem in Lebanon.

Al-'Usaymi announced that the final meeting of the six-member committee will be in Lebanon itself despite the gravity of such a move. He said it has been decided that they will meet with the political factions there in the course of the committee's mission, which some wrongly believe is aimed at solving the problem. However, he said, the mission is confined to looking for a means to a solution, the extent these efforts can reach toward a solution, and then submitting a report to the Arab League. [passage omitted]

Unsuitability of 'Awn as Political Leader Noted

JN2703122289 Kuwait AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM in Arabic 25 Mar 89 p 1

[Editorial: "The Sabah al-Ahmad School and the Labyrinths of Lebanese Politics"]

[Text] Three-quarters of Lebanon's three crises were the result of foreign causes and the remaining quarter were caused by new Lebanese leaders who were thrown to the forefront by events and turned into power to rule the status quo in Lebanon without possessing the characteristics which were common among traditional and veteran politicians.

General Michel 'Awn is one of those who lack the qualifications of a political leader who can be trusted and relied upon to determine the destiny of a homeland, handle the capabilities of a people, or manage people and institutions. 'Awn has suddenly jumped from being an ordinary officer in charge of a unit to an Army commander and head of a government including two military ministers. He jumped to the forefront to compete with the politicians and militia leaders, fill the vacuum, and become an equal to regional and international forces whose interests converged on Lebanon's territory, and whose political and military ideologies have become entangled in their search for incentives, positions, and privileges. Those who are close to the general know that he makes rash decisions and bad assessments and loves fame.

Lebanon is a school for everything. Politics almost fills its heart and mind. It has the most experienced and astute Arab politicians who are more than capable of exploiting and employing circumstances to their's and other's benefit. Lebanon cannot be ruled by a soldier. Its causes and problems cannot also be resolved by military means.

Those who fight to place illegal ports under their control and who issue statements and declare war against true and false adversaries lack experience and love fame. They are waging battles against the wind and plunging the Lebanese homeland once again into the cauldron of communal strife, thereby side-stepping all rules and norms and ignoring the Lebanese saying that political dialogue must remain the name of the game, because it is more capable of competing with the dialogue of guns, rifles, and explosives.

Gen 'Awn cannot open fire or cease fire unilaterally. He also cannot close or open crossing points and ports by a military decision because the Lebanese volcanoes are still active. They will only calm down with Lebanese understanding and the capability of the six-member committee to impose a sound and balanced peace, a peace which stems from an agreed upon reform program.

This is what Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad is undertaking using his political skill and employing his diplomatically astute knowledge of the Lebanese school and its leaders.

The best advice we can give to Gen 'Awn is to train himself in the school of our foreign minister so he will know how to deal with a complicated and entangled crisis such as the Lebanese one.

Oman

Deputy Premier Welcomes Formation of ACC

JN2603104089 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 26 Mar 89 pp 18, 14

[By Faysal al-Shubul]

[Text] Oman—Qays al-Zawawi, Omani deputy prime minister for financial and economic affairs, welcomed the establishment of the Arab Economic Council [ACC] and viewed it as a new step taken within the framework of the the Arab cooperation blocs which seek to serve the interests of all Arab peoples.

In a statement to SAWT AL-SHA'B, Al-Zawawi paid tribute to the strong relations between Jordan and the Sultanate of Oman, the foundations of which were laid by His Majesty King Husayn and His Majesty Sultan Qabus ibn Sa'id. He indicated that the coming days will witness further bilateral cooperation in the field of launching joint industrial ventures and increasing the volume of bilateral trade exchange.

Al-Zawawi hopes the current phase will herald the beginning of a new development era in the Arab world following the slowdown and recession caused by reduced oil prices. He indicated that old oil prices cannot be revived.

The Omani official said that the Arab financial institutions are called upon to continue their contributions to development and construction and to support Arab development projects.

United Arab Emirates

U.S. Senator Fowler Holds Talks With Leaders

Sees Foreign Ministry Official

JN2503171689 Manama WAKH in English 1600 GMT 25 Mar 89

[Text] Abu Dhabi, March 25 (GNA)—The United Arab Emirates (UAE) urged the United States to pursue a "just and balanced policy" towards the Middle East and the Palestinian cause and asked Washington to pressure Israel to end its brutal actions against the Palestinians in occupied territories.

This came during a meeting between UAE Foreign Undersecretary Shaykh Hamdan ibn Zayid Al Nuhayyan and Wyche Fowler, a U.S. Congress member from Georgia, who is currently visiting the country.

Shaykh Hamdan also asked the United States to press Israel to recognise the rights of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate rights including their right to establish their own independent state on their national soil. He expressed hope that the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue would continue and lead to Washington's recognition of the Palestinian rights and to resolving the Palestinian issue.

"The United States as a superpower should play a major role in maintaining world security and peace and help to settle regional and international problems and differences, especially the Palestinian cause and in pushing forward the peace negotiations between Iraq and Iran to achieve peace and stability in the Gulf region," Shaykh Hamdan said.

The meeting attended by Shaykh Fahim Sultan al-Qasimi, director of the Studies and Legal Affairs Department at the Foreign Ministry and U.S. Ambassador David Lyle Mack, reviewed bilateral relations in various fields.

The U.S. official is here as part of a tour of the region which has already taken him along with the UAE to Iraq and Bahrain. He will pay similar visits to Saudi Arabia and Oman.

Fowler's mission is aimed at acquainting himself with the views of the leaders of the countries he is visiting, regarding the situation in the Middle East.

Meets With Shaykh Zayid

JN2603114489 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0530 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Text] Al-Marfa', 25 Mar (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Zayid ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], called on the United States to take practical measures to advance peace efforts and convene an international conference in order to resolve the Palestine question, strengthen its ties with Arab states, and enhance mutual trust through exerting intensive efforts to establish peace in the Middle East.

This came out during a meeting held here this evening between Shaykh Zayid and Wyche Fowler, U.S. senator from Georgia.

WAM said that following the meeting, the U.S. official affirmed the United States' commitment to its friends in the Gulf region and that he indicated that the UAE has been viewed as a special friend to the United States, especially during the past few years which witnessed a critical phase of tension and wars in the region.

Fowler added that he will stress to the U.S. President the need to see the United States continue to help its friends. He went on to say that he will also stress to the President the need to keep international navigation passageways open, encourage free trade with the Gulf states, and strengthen the ties of friendship with the region's states in general.

During the meeting, they discussed the situation in the Gulf region, the efforts being exerted to reach a peaceful settlement of the Iraq-Iran conflict, the overall developments of the Middle East conflict, the need to work to bring about security and stability in the region, and relations between the UAE and the United States.

Further on Visit by Saudi Arabia's King Fahd

Receives Award From President

JN2603094089 Baghhdad INA in Arabic 2115 GMT 25 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, 25 Mar (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has awarded King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, the Al-Rafidayn medal of the first order of civilian medals—the highest medal in the Iraqi Republic—in appreciation for the custodian of the two holy mosques' position always at the forefront of the Arab leaders who always contribute money to give weapons to our Armed Forces' fighters—an unprecedented and generous act.

Following is the text of the republican decree on awarding the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, monarch of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Al-Rafidayn civilian medal of the first order.

In the Name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

Republican Decree.

No 166

The battle fought by Iraq against the racist expansionist Iranian aggression was a type of battle which is decisive in the life of nations. Fate has two options: first, the nation would move forward if victorious, or second, if defeated, it would then suffer what every defeated nation suffers.

Because the battle was of this type, everyone—the sons of the Arab nation—poured their efforts into this battle either directly or indirectly to elevate its position, heighten its value, and strengthen its security.

This confrontation was very difficult. Human, morale and material resources were rallied almost to their maximum extent. It has now run its course after passing through stages whose details are countless. It was a difficult test for every individual of the nation, in addition to being a test for the Iraqis because their country was the venue of the conflict.

At the forefront of those we called on for assistance in that difficult battle and test were our brothers the leaders and rulers. In such circumstances, men acquire their status in accordance with their achievements, based on the amount of tangible effect their actions have on the battle.

The position of our brother, King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, was at the forefront of Arab leaders who generously gave money that placed weapons in the hands of our Armed Forces' fighters with great and unprecedented generosity, in addition to his generosity in other fields.

During the first years of war Iraq was not a producer of weapons. Iraq had to buy all its weapons for the confrontation on the world markets. Because the confrontation continued for 8 years, it nearly consumed all our foreign currency. Every time we needed aid in this confrontation, we sent someone to present some of our needs to a number of our brothers. What caused us to rejoice most under those circumstances was the brotherhood felt by our envoys, which they used to relay to us, from our brother King Fahd when he would meet them and say: Rejoice, we are brothers. You are fighting for the entire Arab nation.

Iraq and Saudi Arabia are in the same situation. We will share with you even our loaf of bread so that the Iraqi nation will emerge victorious in the proud battle. Among the difficult circumstances Iraq experienced was the closing of the oil export terminals through the Gulf and through Syria. We exported very little of our oil through Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea. The Iranians believed, through erroneous predictions, that such a situation, coupled with an extension in the time of confrontation, would enable them to achieve their evil goals against Iraq and the Arab nation.

In accordance with this evaluation, they believed they would overcome Iraq and achieve results that would tip the economic balance in their favor by weakening our economy and cooperating with our allies. Thus, the economic siege of our fuel in our ports in the Gulf and through Syria would succeed after their military operations failed to achieve that goal.

One of the measures we took to confront that scheme was to discuss openly with our brother King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, the possibility of extending a pipeline to transport Iraqi oil through Saudi Arabian territories to the Red Sea.

In accordance with this hospitable trend, our brother the king agreed immediately. He even proposed that we transport a quantity of our oil through the Saudi pipeline at a certain stage in the course of transportation until the entire pipeline project is completed.

The king also placed all the Al-Qadimah port at Iraq's disposal to secure its needs without cost. The brothers in the Kingdom did this at their own expense until they reached warehouses inside Iraq or the borders.

These positions and arrangements had a political, morale-building, and economic effect on the battlefield, as it became obvious that the enemy's attempts to restrict Iraq from exporting oil, which would tip the balance in favor of Iran, were failing. The conspiracies in the other fields and realms were also failing.

We triumphed in this field at a time when our courageous Air Force hawks succeeded in dealing the most painful blows to the Iranian oil arteries, sources of production, and exporting ports.

One of King Fahd's deeds was, after the Zionist entity raided the Iraqi nuclear plant used for peaceful purposes in June, 1981, to promise that the Saudi Arabian Government would shoulder the costs of reconstruction.

Throughout the years of confrontation, King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud was at the forefront of Arab leaders following up the events of the confrontation and supporting Iraq's position in its call to establish peace and good neighborliness and preserve security and stability in the whole region.

Out of the Iraqi people, leadership, and Armed Forces' gratitude for the generous donations supplied by King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques; in their appreciation for his role's great effect on the present and future of the nation; in harmony with the values of loyalty, which the Iraqis and Arabs rallied round, foremost of which are the great Islamic values; and based on the regulations of Paragraph 1 of Article 5 of the Law on Medals and Decorations No 95 of the year 1982, we have decreed the following:

King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, king of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom and custodian of the two holy mosques, shall be granted the Al-Rafidayn Civilian Medal of the First Order.

Written in Baghdad on the 18th day of Sha'ban of the year 1409 Hejira, corresponding to 25 March, 1989 A.D.

Saddam Husayn, President of the Republic

King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, king of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom and custodian of the two holy mosques, awarded his brother President Saddam Husayn the medal of King 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, which is the most cherished medal in the Kingdom, to express some of King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz's feelings toward his brother President Saddam Husayn.

King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, the Saudi Arabian monarch and custodian of the two holy mosques, expressed his joy for having been awarded the Al-Rafidayn medal in a speech he delivered on the occasion. Following is the text:

Words fail to convey my feelings about what his excellency my brother has just said and which you all heard. These are noble Arab ethics. If the Saudi Arabian Kingdom has done its duty, then this is a duty dictated to it by its Islamic doctrines and pure Arab origin, and the Iraqi people's unparalleled pure origin. This is not peculiar for two neighboring countries which are in harmony with each other. No matter how long I search to find better words to express myself, I will not succeed.

Therefore, I give my great thanks to my brother and beloved friend, the military and civilian leaders of Iraq, and the dear Iraqi people. I convey the greetings of the Saudi Arabian Government and people to their brothers here in Baghdad. My greetings to all and once again, thank you to my brother President Saddam Husayn, God bless him.

The decoration ceremonies were attended by 'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council [RCC]; the two members of the RCC First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yasin Ramadan and Vice Pesident Taha Muhyi al-Din Ma'ruf; members of the RCC; ministers; and the accompanying delegation of King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, the fraternal Saudi Arabian Kingdom's monarch and custodian of the two holy mosques.

President Saddam Husayn and his brother King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques and monarch of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom, held a round of talks during which they discussed relations between the two fraternal countries and means of promoting them to serve their mutual interests and elevate the Arab nation.

On the Iraqi side, the talks were attended by RCC Vice Chairman 'Izzat Ibrahim; and the following RCC members: First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yasin Ramadan; Staff General 'Adnan Khayrallah, deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces and minister of defense; Tariq 'Aziz, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Culture and Education Minister Latif Nusayyif Jasim, head of the protocol delegation accompanying the custodian of the two holy mosques; and the Iraqi ambassador in Riyadh.

On the Saudi Arabian side, the talks were attended by His Highness Foreign Minister Sa'ud al-Faysal; Hisham Nazir, minister of petroleum and mineral wealth and acting minister of planning; Minister of Information 'Ali al-Sha'ir; and the Saudi Arabian ambassador in Baghdad.

Non-Interference Accord Signed

JN2703131289 Baghdad INA in English 1250 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 27, INA—President Saddam Husayn and custodian of the two holy shrines, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia signed at the Palace of Saqr al-Qadisiyah here today an agreement of non-interference in internal affairs and forbidding the use of force between Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

President Saddam Husayn and custodian of the two holy shrines, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia signed at the palace of Saqr al-Qadisiyah here today an agreement of non-interference in internal affairs and forbidding the use of force between Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

The agreement consists of four items the first of which states that the two brotherly countries commit not to use force in relations between them.

The two brotherly countries promise according [to] article number two to solve any conflict that might occur between them through peaceful means stipulated by the Arab League Charter and international law.

The third article stated that both brotherly countries refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the other state.

The fourth article said that the endorsement of the agreement must be according to the measures valid in each of the two brotherly countries and will be valid as from the date of exchanging the endorsement documents.

The agreement stressed that both countries realise that protecting the pan-Arab security against the dangers that threaten the sovereignty and security of the Arab countries require the superiority of peaceful relations among the Arab countries based on the respect of sovereignty and preventing the use of force in conflicts and to solve the conflicts through peaceful means and non-interference in internal affairs.

It said that the two countries had decided to sign the agreement out of their belief in the principles of the national action that gather the sons of the Arab nation and the objectives and principles of the Arab League Charter and the joint defence treaty and economic cooperation among the Arab League member states, and to recall the objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter and the rules of the international law.

'Text' of Agreement

JN2703181489 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 27 Mar 89

["Text" of "agreement on noninterference in internal affairs and nonuse of force between the Republic of Iraq and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia"]

[Text] Out of their realization that protecting pan-Arab security from the dangers posed to the Arab states' sovereignty and security on the one hand and to world security and peace on the other requires prevalence of peaceful relations among the Arab states based on respecting sovereignty, preventing the use of force, resolving disputes by peaceful means, and not interfering in internal affairs; out of their belief in the principles of pan-Arab action grouping the Arab nation's sons and in the goals and principles of the Arab League Charter and also in the Collective Defense Pact and economic cooperation among the Arab League states; and also out of their recalling of the objectives and principles of the UN Charter and the bases of international law, the Republic of Iraq and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have decided on the following:

Article 1: The two fraternal states pledge not to use force in the relations existing between them.

Article 2: The two fraternal states pledge to resolve any disputes that may emerge between them by the peaceful means approved in the Arab League Charter and the international law.

Article 3: Each of the two fraternal states will refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the other state.

Article 4: This agreement will be subjected to endorsement in accordance with the procedures enacted in both fraternal states and will take effect as of the date of completing the exchange of the endorsement documents.

Signed in Baghdad on 20 Sha'ban 1409 Hegira, corresponding to 27 March 1989.

Signed for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques and king of Saudi Arabia.

Signed for the Republic of Iraq by Saddam Husayn, president of the Republic of Iraq.

'Security Coordination' Agreement

JN2703171789 Baghdad INA in English 1445 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Baghdad, Mar 27, INA—President Saddam Husayn and King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz signed here today a second agreement on security coordination.

The agreement aims at enhancing security between the two countries and the Arab national security. The two sides agreed on setting up specialised committees to follow up implementation of articles of this agreement.

The two sides had before that signed an agreement on non-intervention in internal affairs, and prevention of the use of force between Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Concludes Visit, Departs 27 Mar

JN2703172889 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1500 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 27 Mar (INA)—King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, left Baghdad this afternoon following a 3-day visit to Iraq. President Saddam Husayn headed the delegation that saw off King Fahd. [passage omitted]

Shamir To Present 'Several Ideas' in U.S.

TA2803061189 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0505 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Report by political correspondent 'Oded Ben-'Ami]

[Text] When the prime minister arrives in Washington next week, he will be equipped with several ideas on the implementation of the interim stage of the process aimed at solving the Palestinian problem in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.

In recent days, Mr Shamir has been busy perusing various plans laid on his desk by his advisers, who include a group of Likud ministers. The plans contain ideas for the practical implementation of autonomy according to Camp David. Several amendments have been made to these, mainly with regard to timetables. The ideas include various methods for transferring rule over the Judaea and Samaria cities to the autonomy council and various approaches and timetables for elections in the territories, including proposals for municipal elections or elections to the autonomy executive council or, alternatively, elections to the Palestinian representation in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to talks with Israel.

The prime minister will tell his interlocutors in Washington that it is useless to discuss a permanent settlement with him; he is, therefore, equipped with ideas for an interim stage only. Mr Shamir will further point out to the U.S. Administration that there is no room for discussion of two issues: an Israeli-PLO dialogue and the establishment of a Palestinian state. What remains, if the process is to be promoted and a stalemate avoided, is sticking to the Camp David accords or rather—at this stage—to the part in them dealing with the interim arrangements.

As for the American demand that Israel show goodwill and reduce pressure in the territories, sources in Jerusalem pointed out to us last night that Israel has already taken action to lessen the friction by reducing the volume of its forces in densely populated areas, such as the Gaza Strip. When in Washington, Mr Shamir plans to discuss further steps to ease the living conditions in the territories.

Shamir To Insist on Only 1 State in Israel

TA2703204389 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2000 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said that he will tell U.S. leaders that there will be only one state within Eretz Yisra'el, and that is the State of Israel. Shamir said that this is the basic principle from which anything else must emanate. Our party affairs correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Mr Shamir made these statements at a Likud convention in Tel Aviv held to mark the party's victory in the recent municipal elections.

Deputy Prime Minister David Levi, also speaking in Tel Aviv, complained that the prime minister has not consulted with him or with other Likud members in preparation for his trip to the United States. Shamir later told reporters that he does not make any decisions without consulting others. In response to another question, Shamir said that he would meet top Labor Party officials prior to his departure.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 2030 GMT on 27 March adds that "speaking to correspondents after the convention, the prime minister said that reports of a rift between himself and Foreign Minister Arens are not true."]

Shamir: Alternate Plans Will Not Weaken Stand

TA2803163789 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said today that the fact that both Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Finance Minister Shim'on Peres have political plans will not weaken the position he will present to the U.S. Administration. Shamir made this statement during a tour of the Mate Binyamin Council settlements. Our correspondent Yaron Toren reports:

[Begin recording] [Toren] Mr Shamir began his tour of the Mate Binyamin settlements in Har Adar. The settlers told him of their financial problems and the lack of an adequate infrastructure of schools and roads for the settlement. The prime minister encouraged them and promised to help. Upon leaving, Shamir was asked if the visit to settlements beyond the Green Line is of political significance against the background of his forthcoming trip to the United States.

[Shamir] This is an ordinary thing. I tour settlements. Settlements grow and develop. There is nothing politically new about this.

[Toren] One more question: Indignation has been voiced in the Likud about the existence of three political plans: yours, Peres', and Rabin's. Do you think this could harm your visit to the United States?

[Shamir] No indignation has been expressed, and I do not believe this will cause any harm.

[Toren] Shamir added that he still plans to hold a number of consultations with all members of the Cabinet and other elements before his departure for the United States. He said that the plan he will present to the administration will be finalized only after these consultations. Shamir said that exposing his plan to the media before his departure may impair its effectiveness.

After concluding the tour Shamir left for Giv'at Ze'ev, where he was awarded honorary citizenship; he also planted a tree. [end recording]

Palestinian Notables, Shamir Deny Meeting

TA2803105789 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 28 Mar 89 p 1

[Report by 'AL HAMISHMAR correspondents]

[Text] Yesterday Sari Nusaybah vehemently denied meeting Prime Minister Shamir for conversation. He said that they have never met and that the report published yesterday is untrue.

Sari Nusaybah said that he believes that "the reason for the publication of this false rumor is an attempt to pretend that negotiations with notables from the West Bank are being held. This was meant to prevent pressure by the international community, which already recognizes the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians, and the fact that Yitzhaq Shamir has to negotiate with the organization," Nusaybah said.

Bethlehem Mayor Ilyas Frayj said last night that the last time he conferred with the prime minister was in November 1986. "I have not met him since then," Frayj stressed.

Hanna Sinyurah and Fayiz abu Rahmah, who are abroad, both denied that the meeting took place.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir also denied the reports on meetings with the four and said that "the reports are imaginary."

Shamir To Visit Spain, 'West European Country'

TA2803112289 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 28 Mar 89 p 12

[Report by diplomatic correspondent]

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir will pay an official two-day visit to Spain in mid-May, and is also expected to visit another West European country, Britain or the Netherlands. Shamir was invited to Madrid in January by Spanish Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordonez, and there have been contacts with both London and The Hague on visits which would take place within the next few months.

2 'Terrorists' Captured in Security Zone

TA2803133989 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1300 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Here is a report just in: Two terrorists were captured in the security zone early this morning. One of them belongs to Abu Nidal's [Sabri al-Banna] organization, the other is a member of Nayif Hawatimah's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. This was reported a short while ago on the Voice of the South radio station in Lebanon. The two arrived at the Shi'ite village of Kunin in southern Lebanon this morning and asked the local mukhtar to transfer them to Sidon. The latter decided to hand them over to the Israel Defense Forces. The terrorists are undergoing questioning in Marj 'Uyun.

1 Injured in Blast Near SLA Headquarters

TA2803154289 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] A powerful charge exploded this morning in the security zone's eastern sector near the Al-Shumariyah pass next to a building serving as headquarters for the South Lebanese Army [SLA]. An SLA soldier was injured and heavy damage was caused. News agencies reported that the SLA retaliated by shelling terrorist enclaves outside the security zone.

SLA Soldier Wounded by Land Mine in Lebanon

TA2803151489 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1500 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] A South Lebanese Army [SLA] soldier was wounded at noon in a land mine explosion in the security zone. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the mine was planted on a dirt road near an SLA position in the central sector and was operated by a terrorist squad watching the road.

South Lebanon Fishing Zone Expanded

TA2703163189 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1600 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] The fishing zone for fishermen in South Lebanon was expanded today to 5 km from the seashore in a ceremony at Al-Naqurah attended by General Lahd, commander of the South Lebanese Army, and senior Israeli army officers.

Brigadier General Ze'ev Zakharin, chief of the Israeli army's liaison unit with Lebanon, said that the move is meant to improve the sources of livelihood for inhabitants of the security zone. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the expansion of the fishing zone required special preparations by the Israeli navy.

'Careful Monitoring' of Iraqi Reactor Promised

TA2803114189 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 28 Mar 89 p 1

[Report by Menahem Shalev and Elaine Fletcher]

[Excerpt] Official Israeli sources yesterday confirmed that Saudi Arabia has offered to finance the rebuilding of the Iraqi nuclear reactor destroyed in the 1981 Israel Air Force raid.

The fact that the rebuilding of the plant was announced publicly by President Saddam Husayn earlier this week could also carry a political message for Iran and Israel.

The sources added, however, that it is still unclear whether Baghdad has taken or will take any practical steps to obtain a nuclear weapons capability.

A senior official told THE JERUSALEM POST yesterday that Israel is carefully monitoring Iraqi intentions. He said that if Iraq once again embarks on a nuclear course, Israel would likely inform the U.S. of its grave concern and warn Washington of the "negative consequences."

Because of Iraqi use of chemical weapons in the Gulf War, and the potentially destabilizing effect of an Israeli preventive action, the U.S. would most likely take "forceful measures" to dissuade Iraq from rebuilding the reactor, the official said. [passage omitted]

Hungarian Official Predicts Ties To Resume

TA2803111689 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 28 Mar 89 p 1

[Report by Greer Fay Cashman]

[Text] Diplomatic ties between Hungary and Israel will resume "within three months," says the man who broke them 22 years ago.

Former Hungarian prime minister Professor Jeno Fock predicted, during a visit at THE JERUSALEM POST yesterday that, despite conflicting reports, Hungary will be the first East European country to renew full diplomatic relations. Poland and Bulgaria, and not much later also Czechoslovakia, are likely to follow.

"The Soviets will follow sooner or later as well," he added.

Fock admitted it had been a mistake to presume that by severing relations in 1967, the Soviet bloc could unify the Arab world or influence Israel to make concessions. He was Hungary's prime minister from 1967 to 1975 when he resigned in protest against Soviet pressure to stop economic reforms which he had introduced.

The former premier is part of a three-man Hungarian delegation which arrived last Thursday, as guests of the Association of Engineers and Architects in Israel. They have toured the Technion in Haifa and are looking at hi-tech developments. He believes that there could be future cooperation between Israel and Hungary in this field.

Fock, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, heads MTESZ (The Federation of Technical and Scientific Societies in Hungary), an umbrella for 150,000 engineers and 33 scientific organizations.

The other members of the delegation are Dr. Gabor Hovanyi, president of the organization's Israel Labour Committee and Sandor Kadar, in charge of MTESZ international relations. During their visits here a cooperation agreement between MTESZ and the Israel Association of Engineers and Architects is to be signed.

Qatzav Inaugurates El Al Air Link With Hungary

TA2803112389 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 28 Mar 89 p 12

[Report from Budapest by Tzvi Zinger]

[Text] "I see my being here as a great achievement. Opening a direct air link between Israel and Hungary is another step toward the establishment of political ties between the two countries," Transportation Minister Moshe Qatzav said in Budapest yesterday.

The minister inaugurated the first El Al flight from Ben-Gurion Airport in Lod, to Budapest, Hungary's capital city.

Qatzav was met at the Budapest airport by Andras Derzsi, the Hungarian minister of transport; senior officials from the ministry; and representatives of the Hungarian airline, Malev.

Minister Qatzav yesterday said that, because of the large demand for flights between Israel and Hungary, there will soon be two flights weekly instead of only one.

Minister Qatzav also said that the Hungarians expressed interest in participating in the planned Tel Aviv commuter train.

Polish Religion Minister Due To Arrive

TA2603180689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1700 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Text] Polish Religious Affairs Minister Loranc Wladyslaw will arrive in 10 days on a week-long official visit in Israel, upon the invitation of Religious Affairs Minister Zvulun Hammer.

Mr Wladyslaw will visit sites held sacred by all the religions and will hold work sessions with Mr Hammer on issues pertaining to the Polish Jewish community's life.

This is the first visit to Israel by a Polish minister since the relations between the two countries were severed in 1967.

Sweden's Andersson on Relations, Peace

TA1703135189 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 17 Mar 89 p 8

[Report on interview with Swedish Foreign Minister Sten Andersson by Yoram Kessel in Stockholm—date not given]

[Excerpts] Sten Andersson, Sweden's ebullient foreign minister, likes to describe his country's role in forging a link between Washington and the PLO as that of a postman "even though sometimes I had to write some of the letters myself."

Despite his buoyancy at the success of that objective, Andersson declines to see a further central role for Stockholm in promoting what he envisages as the next phase in the Middle East peace process—direct contacts between Israel and the PLO.

"We have no ambition to play a key mediation role," he says. "Our ambition is to help bridge the gap. As friends to Israel and to the Palestinians, we regard it as a duty to try to do this."

Now, he adds, it is clearly the U.S. which must make the running. And, the minister is glad to observe that they will not be tardy in the task. He came back from a meeting with Secretary of State James Baker in Vienna convinced that "the U.S. is willing to continue, and also to develop, the PLO dialogue. I'm quite sure too that Washington is prepared to give much more substance to these contacts."

Andersson certainly feels very strongly about the urgency for swift action. "The longer the period before some substance is added to the process, the bigger will be the risk that there will be an unpleasant, a very unhappy development. More militant, more fundamentalist groups will take over. If that happens, we could have a very difficult, a very dangerous situation."

He talks also of "disaster," stressing "there is no way back, only a way forward, and the way forward is to a dialogue with the PLO and to a Palestinian state alongside Israel—if it's through such a state that the Palestinians choose to express their self-determination."

Although the focus is now on Washington, inevitably, eyes are trained on Jerusalem as well.

"Mr. Shamir is a very intelligent politician and I think, rather logical. I believe he will play some sort of card, although I'm afraid that perhaps he will present in Washington next month something that is enough for American opinion but not enough for the PLO." [passage omitted]

"I regard myself as a long-standing good friend of many, many Israelis and I hope that they still regard me as a good friend, too. But real friends are frank friends and that means I have been able to indulge in heated debate with people on both sides." He minces no words in projecting his fears for Israel should the present drift not be amended.

"As I see things, Shamir, Shim'on Peres, whoever is in power, will eventually have to talk to 'Arafat. It's not up to me to tell them how to do so. But I can say that I fear that Israel can't survive as a democracy, can't survive as a Jewish state, if its leadership doesn't take another political line. What gives me hope is that Israel is a democracy and in a democracy the people have something to say.

"If public opinion for a change grows then the Israel government will have to act—whether it is headed by Shamir, Peres, or whoever.

"No, I believe not," he says with a great hearty laugh, when someone interjects "Ari'el Sharon, too?" [passage omitted]

Now that he has helped bring Washington and the PLO into a talking situation, the minister is certainly not about to be shifted aside or backward by the attempted incursions into Israel of some PLO groups from Lebanon. He brushes aside the reports that Hawatimah's DFLP [Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine] men have attempted to stage several such raids across the Galilee border or even that Hawatimah himself stated that he is not bound by any 'Arafat commitments on terror.

"Whenever we see the Palestinians, we tell them firmly that they have to follow through the commitments in Algiers and Geneva. And I think they are doing all they can to follow the agreement."

Andersson insists that he was not dismayed by negative Israeli reactions to the initiative. "The reaction was much more kindly, more positive than I had imagined it would be both in Israel and among Jews in the United States. The toughest reaction we had was here in Sweden among the local Jewish community."

Now he is very much intent on helping create confidence in Israel, and in furthering contacts between Israelis and Palestinians at all levels.

"A step-by-step approach is all right," says Andersson but, he continues, "there must be a definite goal in sight. It may be okay, as Rabin suggests, for elections to be held as a first stage, even for a period of autonomy as a realistic step, but only if the end of the road is in view. It's quite impossible for the PLO to agree to Camp David simply because there the end result is not clear.

"Nothing is impossible if people want it to happen," he adds, waxing lyrical as he looks to a promising future. "We understand the way many people in Israel fear a Palestinian state, that they are also afraid that it might become a Soviet bastion. But surely the situation might develop otherwise with two states living side by side in peace and cooperating with one another.

"I know there the differences are enormous, but let's look for instance at the Scandinavian example. I know that it has taken a long time to develop but we had enmity here too, plenty of it. In the Middle East things must take time we accept that—but not too much time.

He warms to the idea of the Scandinavian model. "Look, I understand, those Israelis who say they want to go into Samaria and to the settlements there. But equally I must say I understand there are Palestinians who say they want to go back to Haifa and other places. But there must be control of what can and cannot be done.

Even though many of the things Andersson says are hardly a delight to Israeli policy-makers, he is careful to pepper his remarks with soothing talk about appreciating the Israeli position and says that "it is much easier from here to solve the problem." At the same time: "It is important to listen to people from outside. When you are in the middle of a problem you can't always see all the possibilities." And he adds rather severely: "I will not place myself in your government's shoes but if I were there I think I would be able to find solutions. I have some ideas and would discuss them with Israeli leaders should we meet."

Now the difficulty, the minister observes, is how to reconcile the "two dimensions to the time problem. We accept that the Israel government cannot do too much immediately. It must be a process inside the government and between the people and the government.

"But at the same time, on the Palestinian side, youngsters are killed almost every day and it must be very frustrating for them. Then too there are groups inside the PLO which are not very happy with the moderate line and also groups outside the PLO, supported by one or more countries, who are eager to disturb and destroy the process.

"In the short term, it has to be accepted that the intifadah [uprising] cannot be solved by military means, it must be solved by political means. That's why it is so important that Israel starts talking with the Palestinians right away. It must be hell for Israeli soldiers trained to fight powerful enemies to have to face these youngsters. Soldiers who have children themselves or families must be suffering."

So what advice does he proffer in the short term? "There should be less brutality, not so many people killed. There must surely be other military means other than rubber bullets with steel inside. Many officers in the Israel army seem to think like that, too."

Would he care to provide a recipe for action in specific terms? "Were I a member of the Labour Party in Israel I would follow another line than that adopted by Mr. Rabin. But...," and he stops himself mid-sentence, "I shall not go any further."

Would he advise the Isreal Labour party to quit the coalition government? "Very interesting. I have very clear opinions. But let me say no more. It must be part of my silent diplomacy approach," he says with a broad smile.

Not really so silent, nor any longer so concealed.

Reports of Renewed Ties with Zambia Denied

TA2803112189 Tel Aviv THE NATION in English 28 Mar 89 p 3

[Report by Maxine Bernstein]

[Text] The Foreign Ministry yesterday strongly denied reports that recently appeared in the Israeli press indicating that Israel would soon renew diplomatic ties with Zambia. "I don't think there was any truth in that," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Eyal Arad.

Shahal, Olmert Reject Offers To Meet PLO

TA2403145889 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 24 Mar 89 p 1

[Report by Ilan Kfir]

[Excerpt] Energy and Infrastructure Minister Moshe Shahal and Minister Without Portfolio Ehud Olmert have recently turned down offers, conveyed to them via European bodies, to confer with senior PLO leaders in a European capital.

Last night Minister Olmert confirmed to HADASHOT that he had indeed been approached regarding meetings with very high-ranking PLO officials. "From time to time people come to me with a suggestion that I participate in meetings—conventions, conferences, or other forums—in which PLO representatives participate, intending for me to meet with the most senior echelons in the PLO during those meetings," he said. "Normally it takes me 2 seconds to reject such offers." Minister Shahal refused to comment.

HADASHOT has learned that the PLO leadership is trying to arrange meetings with Israeli ministers in an effort to increase its influence on the Israeli public.

Dr Nimrod Novik, Peres' political adviser, and Brigadier General (reserves) Efrayim Sne plan to meet with PLO activists over the weekend. The two have left for Lausanne, Switzerland, where they are to participate in a political seminar that will also be attended by PLO personalities. [passage omitted]

Shamir Sees 'Real Prospect' of Immigration Wave

TA2803121889 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister Shamir this morning told the forum for economic strategy meeting at Kibbutz Ma'ale Hahamisha that the Israeli economy must ready itself for the real prospect of mass immigration from the East in the near future. Harley Braidman reports:

Shamir told 250 delegates from all sectors of the economy that very soon there will be a very good prospect of big immigration with a high level of education. We will face a difficult test of absorption as we do not have adequate tools to deal with this wave, and we will have to create them, the prime minister said. We shall need the aid of all parties in the economy, particularly of industry.

He welcomed the economic forum and called for formulation of effective and original ideas and practical plans. We are under the discouraging impression of a disappointing growth of gross national product and rising unemployment, he said. Everyone is calling for speeding up economic growth, and the economy is in fact in the process of structural changes. Shamir added: We should not be deterred from the painful process of restructuring, which is the only way to recovery. There should be an effort to set up new firms to take up the slack of unemployed among new immigrants and demobilized soldiers.

Dov Lautman, the president of the manufacturers, said Israel must in 10 years have an industry exporting two-thirds of its output, and double its output per worker by the year 2000. We must form 20 multinational firms, each capable of $500-million exports a year.

Knesset Rejects No-Confidence Motion

TA2803161389 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1600 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Our correspondent Ze'ev Kohen has just reported that the Knesset rejected a no-confidence motion in the government submitted by the Arab Democratic Party and the Progressive List for Peace in connection with Israel's policy in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.

Olmert: Israeli Arabs Increasing Subversive Acts

TA2703174689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1700 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Ehud Olmert, minister in charge of the Israeli Arab sector, has said that since the beginning of the uprising in the territories there has been an increase in the number of politically subversive activities and acts of sabotage within the boundaries of the State of Israel.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that in a review he delivered to the Knesset about the Israeli Arabs situation, Minister Olmert said that some of these acts were perpetrated by inhabitants of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, but that most of them were apparently staged by Israeli Arabs. According to him, the number of politically subversive activities was five times higher last year than the year before: 3 Israeli citizens were killed for nationalist motives, 15 Israeli Arab terrorist cells were uncovered, firebombs were thrown, roads were blocked, vehicles were pelted with stones, PLO flags were flown, and hostile graffiti was painted.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1730 GMT on 27 March adds that Olmert gave the following figures: "During 1988, there were 580 incidents of subversive activity inside the State of Israel as opposed to 125 in 1987. 1988 saw 208 terror incidents, including 170 firebomb attacks, as opposed to only 69 terror incidents in 1987."]

Minister Olmert said these statistics must be a warning to both Jews and Arabs, since it points to increased emotional and ideological identification by Israel's Arabs with the radical Palestinian struggle against the state. He called on Israel's Arabs to maintain law and order on Land Day [30 March]. The debate on the minister's review continues.

Arab Knesset Factions Meet Islamic Movement

TA2403161089 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 23 Mar 89 p 2

[Text] Nazareth—A joint meeting was held this week between leaders of the Arab Democratic Party, the Progressive List for Peace, and the Islamic Movement with the aim of coordinating common positions and steps for addressing the problems of Arab residents inside [Israel]. The meeting was attended by Knesset members 'Abd al-Wahab Darawshah and Muhammad Mi'ari, as well as Shaykh 'Abdallah Nimr Darwish.

It has been learned that the representatives of these 3 movements agreed on forming an alliance against the Communist Party and its Democratic Front by officially asking the head of the national Arab municipal committees to introduce fundamental changes in the membership of the committee in defense of lands and the supreme Arab follow-up committee. These committees are totally controlled by the Communist Party and the Democratic Front. This is in the wake of the new changes in the political and municipal map of the Arabs inside following the results of the Knesset and municipal elections. These movements today have heads of local authorities in a number of Arab regions, some of which are heavily populated, such as Umm al-Fahm, 'Arraba, and Rahat.

Appeals Court Set Up in Ramallah, Gaza

TA2803123689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1100 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] The military appeals court, which is being set up in accordance with a high court recommendation, will be presided over by Colonel Uri Shoham. His deputy will be Colonel Dani Gueta.

Our correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that the appeals court will sit alternately in Ramallah and Gaza, and will be subordinate to the military advocate general. This was determined by the defense minister.

Human Rights Center in Territories Inaugurated

TA2703200689 Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] An information center on human rights in the territories was inaugurated in Jerusalem today. It was set up by lawyers, doctors, and Knesset members from four political parties: the Labor Party, the Citizens Rights Movement, Center-Shinuy, and the United Workers Party. The information center's spokeswoman told our correspondent in the territories that the purpose of the center is to collect data on human rights in the territories. These data will later be disseminated among the information center's founders and activists, who are Israeli Arab lawyers.

Police Forbidden To Pose as Journalists

TA2803122989 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Police Commissioner David Krauss has forbidden policemen to pose as journalists. This was decided at a meeting this morning between Krauss and heads of the Israeli journalist union in Jerusalem. From now on, policemen wanting to be disguised as journalists must receive approval from the commissioner himself.

The journalists told Krauss that even if police can pose as journalists legally, this can endanger the security and professional freedom of journalists. Krauss said the police have always tried to help journalists do their job, which he described as important for democracy.

Earlier the foreign press association sent a protest to the prime and foreign ministers saying police posing as journalists is not in the best interests of the State of Israel.

Galilee Leaflet Urges Support for 'Uprising'

TA2803100089 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0800 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] A leaflet disseminated in the Galilee last night calls on the 50,000 Arabs residing in Sakhnin and Biq'at Bet Netofa to support the uprising in the territories, both financially and morally. Our correspondent Yo'el Dar reports that the leaflet authors regard the uprising as an instrument which will lead to the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state.

At the same time, the Arab citizens are urged to maintain public order during the Land Day events on 30 March. This area is scheduled to be the site of processions and rallies organized by the Follow-Up Committee, whose center is in Shefar'am.

Arabs Organize 'Clandestine' Fund for Hamas

TA2803075689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0600 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Arab townships in the north have launched a fund-raising campaign for members of the orthodox Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and their families in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. The campaign was organized by various Muslim clerical circles, and it competes with the aid organized by the popular committees, which are under the influence of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality. While the fund-raising campaign being run by the popular committees is carried out openly, the campaign on Hamas' behalf is clandestine.

The Arab settlements are continuing to collect food and medicines for residents of the territories. Some of the products have already been sent to their destination.

Further on Incidents, Casualties in Territories

Gaza Strip Strike Ends

TA2803075889 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0730 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] The commercial strike which was announced yesterday in the Gaza Strip has ended and departure for work in Israel was normal this morning.

Our correspondent in the south Roni Sofer reports that the curfew imposed on the township of Khan Yunus and the adjacent refugee camp was lifted early this morning. Curfews remain in effect in the Jabalyah, Al-Shati', Al-Burayj, and Al-Mughazi refugee camps, in seven Rafah neighborhoods, and in the Gaza neighborhood of Al-Shaykh Radwan, where the security forces are still looking for the weapon snatched during an incident approximately 1 week ago in which two soldiers were injured.

Khan Yunus Youth Wounded

TA2803172289 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1700 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Excerpts] 'Abdallah Kura'i, 18, of the Khan Yunus refugee camp, was wounded by a plastic bullet fired by an Israel Defense Forces [IDF] patrol during disturbances and stone-throwing incidents in the camp. The IDF is investigating the circumstances of the incident.

Our correspondent Roni Sofer reports that the Gaza Strip was relatively quiet today. There was a partial commercial strike. [passage omitted]

A firebomb was hurled today at an Egged bus traveling through East Jerusalem neighborhoods. It ignited on the front of the bus, which was slightly damaged, but nobody was hurt.

Jewish Man Remanded for Firebombing Near Yafo

TA2803171889 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Dani Kohen, a 24-year-old resident of Yafo, today was remanded in custody for 8 days. Kohen is suspected of having hurled a firebomb at a car belonging to an Arab resident of the territories as it was passing through Yafo on Sunday. The firebomb missed the car, igniting on the road. Our correspondent Amir Fink reports:

A firebomb was thrown at a car with license plates from the territories in downtown Yafo at 1130 on Sunday. There were neither casualties nor damage. The police immediately arrested Dani Kohen, a resident of Yafo, who confessed to the crime, explaining that he had intended to scare Arabs away from his neighborhood as he feared they might harm local children.

Kohen's lawyer claimed that his client has expressed regret for his action and said that Kohen had only attempted to frighten the Arab, not to hurt anyone or cause damage.

In his decision to detain Kohen for 8 days, Tel Aviv Magistrates Court judge Eli'ezer Kohen stated that 'the last thing Israel needs is for citizens, emulating those who want to harm the state, to take the law into their own hands by throwing firebombs in the middle of Tel Aviv-Yafo.

'Awn Said To Request U.S. Military Intervention

NC2603080989 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0630 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Text] The Kuwaiti paper AL-QABAS reported in its edition yesterday that [General Michel] 'Awn sent a message to the U.S. President in which he requested urgent military intervention in Lebanon by U.S. troops. 'Awn expressed his Army's readiness to be under the command of U.S. troops.

'Awn Refuses To Meet With New Mosad Chief

JN2603162889 Kuwait AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM in Arabic 25 Mar 89 pp 1, 27

[Text] Beirut—Sources in East Beirut have revealed to AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM that the Israeli Mosad's new chief, accompanied by a number of senior Mosad and military intelligence officers, paid a secret visit to East Beirut lasting several hours at the end of last week. The security sources added that the Mosad chief and his companions held a meeting lasting approximately 2 hours with Samir Ja'ja', military commander of the Phalange forces, and discussed important security issues with him.

The sources said General 'Awn, head of the Lebanese Christian government, "the military government", refused to receive and hold talks with the Israeli Mosad's new chief. This is the third time in recent months in which Gen 'Awn has refused to meet with senior Mosad officers, according to Lebanese sources.

'Awn's 20 Mar Message to Al-Asad Revealed

NC2703131189 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] The contents of a message sent by Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn to Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad on 20 March was revealed today. Here is the text of the message:

Your Excellency, Lieutenant General Hafiz al-Asad, president of the Syrian Arab Republic, Damascus:

Bloody incidents occurred in Lebanon on 14 March 1989 when Syrian artillery bombarded certain Lebanese regions. The shelling was targetted against the Lebanese Army's positions and the National Defense Ministry's headquarters, particularly the Army commander's office.

Judging from the concentrated artillery shelling, the delayed-action bombs, and the other different military tools used, which demonstrated a fine and sophisticated fighting technique, it can be concluded, at the very least, that the assassination of the prime minister was one of the objectives of this shelling.

This shelling, which reached secure residential areas without discrimination, as well as ports and utilities, once again raises the issue of the Syrian troops' presence in Lebanon. It is well-known that the Arab Deterrent Force, which comprised troops from several Arab countries, had originaly been placed at the disposal of the Lebanese president, according to resolutions adopted at both the Riyadh and Cairo summits in 1967. In 1979, the composition of this force became almost exclusively Syrian.

It is also known that on 14 July 1982, the [Lebanese] Cabinet adopted a decision providing for the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese armed forces from Lebanon. This decision clearly expresses the Lebanese state's desire to terminate the missions of all Arab military forces in Lebanon without exception.

In accordance with its decision, the Lebanese Government did not request the renewal of the Arab Deterrent Force's mandate when its last mission was concluded on 27 July 1982. This stand was supported by the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies in a recommendation issued on 27 April 1983.

Therefore, since there is no longer a legitimate justification for the Syrian troops presence in Lebanon, whether independently or within the framework of the Arab Deterrent Force, and in addition to the message addressed to you by his excellency the president of the Republic on 1 September 1983, we renew our request to your excellency to withdraw the Syrian Army from all Lebanese territory. We hope we will be notified of your decision on this issue as soon as possible, so that a timetable for this withdrawal can be drawn up by an agreement between the two governments.

With all respect,

Signed: Gen Michel 'Awn, prime minister

'Awn To Continue 'Struggle' Against Syrians

NC2703193589 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1845 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] French television's Channel Two carried in its 2000 hours newscast a report on the recent incidents in Lebanon, featuring a live interview with Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn. Gen 'Awn stressed in the interview his determination to continue the struggle against the Syrian occupation and accused the Syrians of shelling power plants and fuel depots. He said: We will not surrender to the occupier, and we have to continue the resistance. Replying to a question on the capability of the resistance. 'Awn said: We will continue to resist until death.

Ministry Appeals to Governments on Syrian Attacks

NC2303144089 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 23 Mar 89

[Text] The Foreign Ministry notified the head of the Arab good offices committee Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, the Arab League secretary general, and the five big powers through their ambassadors to Lebanon of the price of the Syrian violence exercised yesterday against Lebanese areas in Al-Matn and Kasrawan, on the coast, and on the mountain. The ministry also briefed them on the extent of Syria's use of heavy artillery for several hours last night.

The Foreign Ministry stressed the need for action to end the artillery bombardment and military escalation, which was not confined to Al-Matn and Kasrawan, but involved other areas in East Beirut, especially Beirut port. The Foreign Ministry asked Lebanese ambassadors abroad to brief the governments to which they are accredited on Syria's actions and use of forceful pressure in order to persuade the governments of the five big powers to urge Syria to leave the Lebanese alone.

Appeals to Arab League, UN

NC2803134189 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Excerpts] The Council of Ministers has appealed to the Arab League and the UN secretary general to act quickly in order to withdraw the Syrian troops from the Lebanese territories in implementation of international resolutions on the evacuation of non-Lebanese armies from Lebanon. The council reserved the right to invite the Arab League and the UN Security Council to meet at the appropriate time.

Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn chaired the first weekly meeting of the cabinet at 0930 today. The meeting lasted until 1330. [passage omitted]

The following statement was issued after the meeting:

At its first weekly meeting after the Easter holiday, the Council of Ministers discussed the latest developments in its various local, regional, and international aspects, in light of the Syrian attacks which claimed a number of civilian victims, destroyed important and vital economic institutions, in addition to the heavy material damage resulting from the Syrian artillery and rocket fire.

The council also discussed the attempt by units of the Syrian regular army to penetrate the Suq al-Gharb front. The attempt was bravely foiled by the Lebanese Army.

The council believes that these attacks are a serious trend and an obvious war launched against Lebanon by military forces belonging to a member state in the Arab League and the UN Security Council which are illegally present on the Lebanese soil, contrary to international resolutions.

The council appealed to the Arab League and the UN secretary general to act quickly to withdraw the Syrian troops from Lebanese territory, in implementing international resolutions on evacuating non-Lebanese armies from Lebanon. the council reserves the right to invite the Arab League and the UN Security Council to meet at the proper time. The council addressed thanks to the friendly and brotherly countries which have expressed support for Lebanese rights in this connection.

The council was briefed by Staff Brigadier Gen 'Isam Abu Jamrah, deputy prime minister and minister of economy, on the outcome of his visit to Baghdad, the talks he held with high-ranking Iraqi officials, and the economic agreement he signed on strengthening and developing the trade relations between the two brotherly countries.

The council also conveyed congratulations to the Christian communities on Easter, expressing the hope that the ordeal will end and Lebanon will restore its peace, unity, and sovereignty on all its territory. The council called on the Lebanese people in all areas to stand fast and keep faith in Lebanon's eventual salvation.

Kuwaiti Envoy Comments After Meeting With 'Awn

NC2403102789 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 24 Mar 89

[Interview with Ahmad 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Jasim, Kuwaiti ambassador to Syria, by unidentified correspondents after a 75-minute meeting with Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn in Beirut on 24 March—recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Mr Ambassador, can we consider your quick visit to Lebanon to be within the framework of endeavors to reduce the military escalation?

[Al-Jasim] Yes.

[Correspondent] Have you reached any particular result?

[Al-Jasim] It is difficult to reach a result in 30 minutes or 1 hour.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] for a solution?

[Al-Jasim] No.

[Correspondent] Did you carry a reply message to Prime Minister 'Awn?

[Al-Jasim] From whom?

[Correspondent] A reply message from President al-Asad?

[Al-Jasim] I have no information that there is a message.

[Correspondent] What are the proposals you have conveyed to Gen 'Awn from Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Shaykh al-Sabah?

[Al-Jasim] I am only a listener today.

[Correspondent] Have you reached a result on the issue of the ports?

[Al-Jasim] God willing.

[Correspondent] Mr Ambassador, are you going to meet with Salim al-Huss?

[Al-Jasim] Yes.

[Correspondent] Now, immediately?

[Al-Jasim] Yes.

[Correspondent] Is there any response on the issue of the ports? Are there any proposals, a compromise, that could constitute a common denominator for this issue?

[Al-Jasim] There was an exchange of views.

[Correspondent] Do you believe that if the ports issue is resolved then the military escalation will end?

[Al-Jasim] Naturally, God willing.

[Correspondent] Is the military escalation the result of the ports issue or of the issue of the Syrian occupation presence in Lebanon?

[Al-Jasim] That is a big question. How can I answer it? [laughter]

[Correspondent] If you, Mr Ambassador, cannot answer it, who can answer within the framework of your endeavors?

[Al-Jasim] Everything will be all right, God willing. Everything will be all right.

[Correspondent] Mr Ambassador, is Shaykh al-Sabah having contacts with the Syrian side?

[Al-Jasim] I am outside these contacts. I am not in the picture.

[Correspondent] Do you not think that if the military escalation continues it will affect the third stage of the Arab [League] committee meetings in Tunis on Tuesday [28 March]?

[Al-Jasim] Hopefully it will not affect them.

[Correspondent] Can a solution be found for the ports issue and military escalation before the Tunis meetings?

[Al-Jasim] God willing.

[Correspondent] Are you expecting this?

[Al-Jasim] We are trying.

[Correspondent] Does this mean that we are still wishing and hoping, or are there certain practical steps?

[Al-Jasim] One must have hope and then wish for it to be turned into reality.

[Correspondent] Are you going to see anyone other than Salim al-Huss in West Beirut?

[Al-Jasim] No, I will only see Dr Salim al-Huss.

[Correspondent] Gen 'Awn has proposed the formation of a Lebanese-Syrian military committee to supervise the cease-fire. Are you working on this issue?

[Al-Jasim] No.

Holds Talks With Al-Huss

NC2403110189 Beirut Voice of National Resistance in Arabic 1030 GMT 24 Mar 89

[Excerpt] Kuwaiti Envoy Ahmad 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Jasim has met for just over an hour with Prime Minister Dr Salim al-Huss. After the meeting, Al-Jasim said that he is remaining in Beirut to hold contacts with political leaders. He said that his task is more important than the Arab League committee's work. He added that he has found positive aspects in the attitudes of all parties. Responding to a question on the ports, Al-Jasim said: The issue of the ports has not yet been resolved, but we hope that it is in the process of being resolved. Al-Jasim then returned to the eastern area. [passage omitted]

Conveys Al-Huss Proposal to 'Awn

NC2403121789 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 24 Mar 89

[Text] Kuwaiti Ambassador 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Jasim left for Damascus after a brief meeting with General Michel 'Awn, during which he conveyed to him proposals from Prime Minister Dr Salim al-Huss. It has been learned that General 'Awn has not agreed to these proposals.

Arab Committee Meeting With Leaders Postponed

NC2803091189 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Guarded calm is prevailing along the combat lines and in the areas of the clashes after a night of violent shelling from artillery and rockets which hit areas in West Beirut, Beirut's southern suburb, the mountain, Kasrawan, and villages in Al-Biqa'. The clashes began easing after midnight last night. It has been reported that a fire broke out in a fuel depot in Al-Dawrah and in scores of buildings.

This escalation came at a time when the Arab League committee is exerting efforts to end the violence and find a solution to the Lebanese crisis.

The committee postponed its consultations with five former Lebanese presidents on the best way to resolve the Lebanese issue until this afternoon. After protracted discussions with the five former presidents, former prime ministers, and former Chamber of Deputies speakers in a bid to persuade them to meet yesterday evening, the committee deemed it appropriate to wait until this afternoon, pending the opening this morning of the spring session of the Arab ministerial council within the framework of the Arab League.

A source close to former Prime Minister Sa'ib Salam has stated that the five individuals have asked the committee to exert pressure on the conflicting parties to stop the shelling. Eighty-four persons have been killed and 355 others wounded in the shelling since 14 March. These individuals said that they cannot discuss policy in Tunis while gunfire is heard in Lebanon.

According to a diplomatic source, some former presidents have refused to meet with the committee collectively, indicating that such a meeting is supposed to be held after the conclusion of separate consultations with each one of them.

Former presidents Sulayman Franjiyah and Amin al-Jumayyil and former prime ministers Amin al-Hafiz, Shafiq al-Wazzan, and Rashid al-Sulh, as well as former Chamber of Deputies Speaker 'Adil 'Usayran arrived in Tunis yesterday afternoon. Former Prime Minister Sa'ib Salam arrived there two nights ago.

Until late last night, no information had been made available on the course of action to be adopted by the Arab Committee.

The Arab League session is scheduled to open this morning with the extension of Chedli Klibi's term of office as secretary general. According to observers, the foreign ministers of the six states represented in the good offices committee will then ask their permanent representatives in the Arab League to continue attending the session so that foreign ministers may dedicate themselves to the Lebanese issue.

Arab League sources said that the League's attempt to resolve the Lebanese crisis faced problems last night when former President Amin al-Jumayyil refused to meet with mediators accompanying six other Lebanese politicians.

Former president Sulayman Franjiyah and former prime ministers Sa'ib Salam, Rashid al-Sulh, Amin al-Hafiz, and Shafiq al-Wazzan went to meet with the mediators hours after the scheduled time but they left 10 minutes after the start of the meeting. Former Prime Minister Sa'ib Salam declined to discuss what happened. An Arab League spokesman said only that the meeting will be held this afternoon.

Arab League sources stated that former president Al-Jumayyil wants to meet with the Arab ministers alone. The sources added that former speaker 'Adil 'Usayran was exhausted and did not attend.

Al-Huss Urges Arab Committee To Continue Efforts

NC2503083389 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0800 GMT 25 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister Dr Salim al-Huss emphasized that the Arab ministerial committee must continue its mission until a solution to the Lebanese crisis is found. Al-Huss expressed his happiness that the ministerial committee has resumed its activities. He said: We support it with all our available means and resources. Al-Huss said that the object of General Michel 'Awn's spiteful campaign against the presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon is to divert attention from Lebanon's real problems—reconciliation and reform.

Fadlallah: Arab League Committee 'U.S. Plan'

NC2503081589 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0630 GMT 25 Mar 89

[Text] Ayatollah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah [spiritual guide of Hizballah] beliveves that the current crisis in which the region's Muslims currently live is one of the most difficult phases, and that this time it requires a unification of efforts because the aim is to make again Lebanon a country of sectarian privileges.

In his Friday sermon, his eminence said the observers [as heard] in Lebanon do not seek to distance themselves from the U.S. policy, noting that the Arab League committee is a U.S. plan.

Commenting on General Michel 'Awn's liberation slogan, Scholar Fadlallah said this motto is not genuine but emanates from a political ploy, which seeks to prolong the Lebanese crisis.

Al-Huss Comments on Syrian Role, Arab Efforts

NC2203105589 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1000 GMT 22 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister Dr Salim al-Huss believes that the possibility of an explosion still exists. He held Michel 'Awn responsible for this, because of his attempt to impose his control over the whole Lebanese coast by closing the ports.

In an interview with the Kuwaiti paper AL-ANBA', Dr al-Huss asserted that the withdrawal of the Syrian forces from Lebanon can be attained by a decision adopted by one unified Lebanese government. He said that this requires an army that is capable of imposing control over all of Lebanon. He added: The Syrian forces originally entered the country in 1976 as a result of a Lebanese decision, reinforced later by an Arab resolution during the Cairo Arab summit. The Syrian forces returned to areas, including Beirut, from which they had withdrawn during the 1982 Israeli invasion, in accordance with a Lebanese decision after a destructive war.

Dr al-Huss then alluded to the efforts that are being exerted by the Arab League committee. He said that the committee and its fraternal effective role are indispensable if the Lebanese truly wish to emerge from the whirlpool of the crisis which is engulfing them. Dr al-Huss pointed out that it is natural for the committee to encounter obstacles, because of the complicated nature of the Lebanese crisis and the diverse intervening factors. He affirmed that no obstacle should prevent the committee from continuing its task to the end, namely, until it achieves the goal for which it was set up—the salvation of Lebanon.

Al-Huss Holds News Conference on Naval Blockade

NC2703134589 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] At a news conference held at the Government House this morning, Prime Minister Dr Salim al-Huss defined the motives of the recent explosion, stressing the need to abolish the naval blockade decision adopted by General 'Awn, which has led to a series of bloody events since 14 March with the shelling of the streets' junctions in the capital.

At the outset of his news conference, Prime Minister al-Huss said: The real problem is that Gen 'Awn, by his decision on the ports, does not seek to ensure the financial revenues to the Treasury but to impose his authority, which does not exist at present, on the entire Lebanese coast through a naval blockade implemented by the Naval Operations Room under the pretext of safeguarding the rights of the Treasury. It is known that most of the Lebanese coast lies in areas which basically do not recognize the legitimacy of the so-called military government. The fuse must be removed. This can be achieved by refraining from attempts to achieve political goals under financial slogans or through military means.

The Naval Operations Room has been the fuse that triggered the explosion which caused terrible human tragedies and pushed the entire security situation to the verge of a horrible collapse.

Dr al-Huss added: On the morning of 14 March 1989, our people awoke to the horror of a terrible human massacre implemented by those who claim responsibility in Lebanon through an indiscriminate shelling of the residential areas and the capital's crossroads with crowded people going to their work or schools. The circle of the massacre soon expanded to include other areas in Lebanon. That black day marked an ominous beginning of a new phase of bloody and horrible escalation of which we had warned earlier. For the first time the shelling reached areas it had not previously reached.

The prime minister emphasized: It is now important to quickly end this new series of mad violence. After 14 years of bloody tragedies, it has become very clear to whoever has eyes to see that violence does not resolve problems. This must be sufficient to deter any party from again resorting to arms, and to prompt everybody to peacefully solve the problems that arise among them.

Prime Minister al-Huss concluded his press statement by saying: Liberation as we understand it means the liberation of a dear part of Lebanon's territory from the claws of the Israeli enemy. As for talking about a so-called liberation war against the Syrian Arab forces, this requires the following clarification:

The Syrian Arab forces basically entered Lebanon in 1976 in accordance with a Lebanese decision which was soon coupled by an Arab resolution at the Cairo summit. These forces returned to areas, from which they had withdrawn during the Israeli invasion of 1982, including Beirut, by a Lebanese decision after destructive battles among the gunmen had mowed down innocent people inside their areas and homes. As for these forces' exit from Lebanon, this is also contingent upon a Lebanese decision.

Such a decision cannot be made by Gen 'Awn alone, but it must be issued by the cabinet of a single government when an alternative is found for the preservation of security and stability in the areas in which the Syrian forces are deployed at present to play this role. The Syrian Arab forces, in the areas in which they are now deployed, are playing a praiseworthy role to prevent the eruption of new wars, pending the emergence of a just legitimate authority capable of replacing them and relieving them of this burden. Any other talk about the withdrawal of the Syrian forces is out of place. By doing so, Gen 'Awn is sowing a war without reaping what he terms liberation.

The Lebanese crisis cannot be resolved by a war of any kind but by an agreement among the Lebanese on the form of future Lebanon, in accordance with what I referred to in details in the memorandum I presented to your august chamber during its previous session on 13 January 1989.

Asked if there are political efforts to achieve a cease-fire, Dr al-Huss said: We often tried to reach a cease-fire agreement with the so-called military government but in vain. That party insisted on concluding a cease-fire agreement especially with Syria. It was not ready to reach a cease-fire agreement with any Lebanese party. Therefore, in view of the fact that the realization of this demand by the so-called military government is difficult because of the political implications it entails, we have not yet reached such an agreement, and all cease-fires occur spontaneously.

We emphasize that we cannot accede to the political meanings entailed in a cease-fire between the military side and Syria because they mean that an internal Lebanese issue does not exist but that there is a foreign conflict with the military party being the only party to it. Therefore, this means the cancellation of all the parties to the conflict in Lebanon and confinement of the Lebanese representation to the current conflict to Gen 'Awn and the so-called military government.

What we fear most is that this could entail another meaning, namely, a way to internationalize the Lebanese crisis by putting the internationalization card in the hand of that military party. Once a cease-fire is established with another country, any violation or collapse of that cease-fire could give an excuse to the military party to submit complaints to the international fora, hence internationalization of the Lebanese crisis. We absolutely see no interest in this for Lebanon.

Asked what has frustrated Ambassador al-Jasim's initiative and if there have been any specific U.S. proposals, Dr al-Huss said: There have not been any specific political proposals, but there is a mere desire that all sides exercise self-restraint and avoid adopting any measures or steps which are bound to generate a flareup or a further security deterioration.

Dr al-Huss empahsized that proper preparations should precede the election of the president. An agreement should also be reached over basic reforms and principles to delineate the course of the future regime and to outline the broadlines of the future Lebanese policy capable of achieving the Lebanese people's freedom, justice, equality, equal job opportunities, and an exercise of genuine effective democracy.

Dr al-Huss added that the idea of the proposed sumultaneous implementation of reforms and election which is being [word indistinct] dictates that the elections should take place simultaneously with the agreement over the principles and basis of reforms and reconciliation as well as with the election of a chamber speaker.

Asked if he believes there is cooperation between Ja'ja' and 'Awn, particularly since both entertain the same policy, Dr al-Huss said: I believe that you cannot separate one from the other. After the fighting that broke out between the Lebanese Forces and Al-Yarzah command, a joint political military command was formed between the Al-Yarzah command and the Lebanese Forces. Therefore, there is an official coordination between the two sides.

Asked if he expects an Israeli aggression at the present, Dr al-Huss said: The Israeli aggression is expected at any moment.

Shams al-Din Calls Ports Closure a 'Farce'

NC2503085389 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0800 GMT 25 Mar 89

[Text] Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din, deputy chairman of the Higher Shi'ite Islamic Council, stated that the war of the ports is a farce. He asserted that the closure of the ports is not a voluntary action but a measure imposed from above and a spearhead for a military coup and military rule.

Shams al-Din called for openness and cooperation with the Arab committee. He stressed that the Lebanon of 1920 has gone for good and that there will be no concessions for any state in Lebanon.

Referring to the federal formula, which some major states adopt, Shams al-Din said: Do not miscalculate because Lebanon will not be federated. The war might go on for 100 years, but Lebanon will not be federated so that a part of it would cooperate with Israel and the other part would be massacred by Israel.

Birri Blames Maronites for New 'Serious' Phase

NC2403064189 Beirut Domestic Service ind Arabic 0530 GMT 24 Mar 89

[Text] Minister Nabih Birri, leader of the Amal Movement, has declared that he will not participate in the Arab League committee meetings in Kuwait or Tunis as long as the Arabs forget that they are Arab. Speaking to journalists in Tyre on the occasion of the convening of the Amal Movement general conference today, Minister Birri said: The phase we are now experiencing constitutes one of the most serious links in the chain of the conspiracy that has been going on for the past 14 years. This link is the Maronite military, which has been trying to ensure hegemony through the rifle on the one hand and to expel the brother and keep the enemy on the other.

Birri Reelected Amal Movement Leader

NC2703171789 Beirut Voice of National Resistance in Arabic 1530 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] The Amal Movement's seventh congress ended its work early today. The Congress reelected Minister Nabih Birri as the Amal Movement leader and Colonel 'Akif Haydar as his deputy. The congress elected Dr Ayyub Humayyid as head of the movement's Executive Committee; Major Ya'qub Dahir as official in charge of organizational affairs; Mustafa al-Hajj as president of the Supreme Court; and Mufti Shaykh 'Abd al-Amir Qabalan as chairman of the Islamic Jurisprudence Committee. The congress elected Rabab al-Sadr as representative of the Imam al-Sadr family.

The congress elected the following officials as members of the movement's Political Bureau: Al-Hajj Ahmad Husayn, 'Abd al-Majid Salih, 'Atif 'Awn, Khalil Hamdan, Ahmad Harb, Hasan Trad, Mahmud Abu Hamdan, Muhammad Baydun, 'Ali 'Attush, Muhammad Nasrallah, Haytham Jum'ah, Muhammad 'Abd 'Ali, 'Abbas Nasrallah, and Hasan Mar'i.

'More Than 50' En Route To Kill Rushdie

NC2403090789 Beirut AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI in Arabic 13-19 Mar 89 p 66

[From "The Last Moment" feature]

[Text] Lebanese security forces have received information that more than 50 persons have left via a number of countries and are heading toward Salman Rushdie's place of residence to carry out the death sentence on him.

PSP, Leftist Offices 'Reopened' in W. Beirut

NC2803083189 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0715 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] For the first time since their closure in 1987, the offices of leftist organizations in West Beirut have noticably been reopened. The flags of the Progressive Socialist Party have reappeared over its old posts in Al-Hamra', Wata al-Musaytibah, Karakul al-Druz, and Saqiyat al-Janzir. It has also been noticed that the soldiers of the Syrian occupation forces are wearing helmets and carrying shields.

Nationalist Parties To Fight Until 'Awn Ousted

NC2803075689 Beirut Voice of National Resistance in Arabic 0610 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] The nationalist parties and forces have declared their firm and final decision to continue the confrontation until 'Awn's coupist clique is overthrown and have urged all influential figures and forces to adopt a clear stand in this respect. They have stated that the removal of this clique has become the only acceptable basis for remedying the explosive situation and opening the doors to a solution to the crisis that will end the war and realize Lebanon's unity and Arabism under a democratic system that will end political sectarianism forever.

In a statement after their meeting yesterday, the nationalist parties and forces said: In this respect and in view of 'Awn's allegations, we tell all those concerned: Ask our people in Zahlah, Al-Batun, Al-Kurah, Al-Matn, Zgharta, and Bshirri who but the Syrian Arab Army is defending their existence and guaranteeing national unity? Ask our displaced folks in the eastern area what guarantee, other than the Syrian Arab forces' guarantee, are you demanding to ensure your safe return?

The statement added: The Syrian Arab presence responds to an official and popular decision and is an extension of an historical and nationalist fact. Those who reject this fact have fallen throughout the ages.

Al-Khatib Army Command Statement Denounces 'Awn

NC2803092989 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0800 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] The Army Command's Guidance Directorate [of Sami al-Khatib] in Beirut has issued the following statement:

For some time now mercenary private radios have been calling on the citizens in the nationalist areas to take precautions because of possible shelling from what they claim to be Syrian emplacements. Only minutes after making these calls, shells began pouring onto these areas from Al-Yarzah, mowing down more victims and causing more destruction.

The Army Command in Beirut draws the public's attention to these exposed methods to which the Al-Yarzah authors of the suicidal plan have been resorting in order to mislead the people and attempt to cover up the hegemonous coupist scheme led by General Michel 'Awn through his impotent and exposed liberation farce. The Army Command in Beirut also urges the citizens in the nationalist areas to be very cautious when they hear such calls, which actually portend imminent death, destruction, and ruination coming from the hell of Al-Yarzah.

Hizballah Statement on Army-Syrian Fighting

NC2803082589 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0630 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] In reaction to the war fabricated by Michel 'Awn against Muslims in Lebanon, Hizballah issued the following statement:

The war launched by the oppressors against the oppressed and by the arrogant against the weak will continue until right is enforced by the authoritative imam, the expected mahdi, may the almighty speed up his honorable release. Only then will the earth be enriched with justice, in contrast to the present injustice and tyranny. The oppressed all over the world have no other option than to resist and defend the truth which the almighty will proclaim over all religion, even though the pagans may detest it [Koranic verse].

In Lebanon, the gangs of political Maronites have kindled the fire of a malevolent war against Islam, Muslims, and Syria. This makes us realize that we are facing a real danger which must be deterred, resisted, and eliminated.

America, which has been and still is the primary enemy of our nation, is every plainly backing the Maronite army, training and supporting it and drawing up its plans so that it can serve its own interests and objectives.

Saddam [Husayn], the atheist of Tikrit who forced a long and cruel war on the Islamic Republic on behalf of the Zionists and arrogance, is placing all his resources at the disposal of the eastern area [of Beirut]. He is accompanied by traitor 'Arafat and the pro-American Arabs and committees. They are all supporting and inciting Israel's agents to fight the Muslims and Syria which is standing up to the Israeli and U.S. schemes and which has stood and still is standing by the Islamic revolution and its Lebanese sons of resistance who have defeated the Western invaders, vanquished the aggressive Jews, and driven them out from parts of our sacred lands.

The statement continues: We would like to remind you all that the troops of the political Maronites were the cheap tools in Israeli hands during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon's Muslim areas in 1982. They were the criminals who committed the massacres in Sabra and Shatila against our Palestinian and Lebanese Muslim kin. They were the same ones who destroyed the southern suburb, burned the mountain, and conspired against every Muslim monotheist who rejects American and Zionist schemes.

The statement concludes by appealing to all Muslims in Lebanon and the world to stand by us and by Syria in the battle to defend our creed, our homeland's identity, and our rights and dignity, so that we can prevent the emergence of another Zionist entity which would threaten our nation's unity, dignity, and sovereignty.

Once again, the statement adds, we remind you that the solution in Lebanon has but one road, namely, the real decisiveness which would liberate the country and the people from the Zionist sectarian regime and establish a system of freedom, justice, and affiliation to our glorious Muslim nation.

Roundup of Army-Syrian Forces Fighting 26 Mar

NC2703064089 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic
0545 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Excerpts] Syrian guns and launchers stopped firing at approximately 0030 this morning, after carrying out their almost daily routine of firing against the defenseless residential areas. In the evening alone the Syrians fired approximately 1,500 shells and rockets at almost all of the eastern areas' neighborhoods and towns, inflicting more casualties among the innocent civilians and causing extensive property damage. [passage omitted]

The Lebanese Army returned the fire from the Syrian emplacements, shelling the Syrian positions in West Beirut, the southern suburb, and on the mountain. The Army fire also reached the Syrians' emplacements in Al-Biqa', specifically in Bindnayil, 'Ali al-Nahri, Riyaq, the Ba'labakk Road, Sa'd Nayil, Ta'labaya, Jalala, Qabb Ilyas, and Shtawrah. The Lebanese Army destroyed an ammunition dump in Al-Maramil, inflicting casualties among its ranks. It also hit a convoy of Syrian vehicles at the 'Alayh circle, inflicting casualties among its crew. [passage omitted]

Palestinians Withdraw According to Amal Accord

NC2803103989 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic
1000 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] In implementing the agreement concluded between the Amal Movement and the Palestinian groups under the auspices of the Nasirite Popular Organization, Palestinian groups withdrew from the roads in 'Ayn al-Dulb and Al-Qurayyah leading to Iqlim al-Tuffah this morning. They were replaced by units from the Nasirite Popular Liberation Army. Three main Palestinian roadblocks were removed from these roads.

Meanwhile, Nasirite Popular Organization leader Mustafa Sa'd has stated: We managed to open the Sidon-Jba' Road in both directions to all citizens today. We thus emphasize that a page in the history of Lebanese-Palestinian relations has been turned and that the link between the city of Sidon and Sidon District has been restored. He added: This step constitutes a basic step on the path toward consolidating the pillars of the unified confrontation against all the plots concocted against this homeland.

Amal Group Attacks Israeli Military Truck

NC2603103189 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic
1008 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Text] An Amal group—a unit of the martyr leaders of the Karbala' company—detonated an explosive charge under an Israeli military truck on the Al-'Ayshiyah-Al-'Jarmaq road at 0520 this morning damaging the truck and killing all its occupants. Consequently, the occupation forces brought in personnel and vehicles as reinforcement into the area. They shelled Kafr Rumman town with tank and mortar guns. They also raked its surroundings with machineguns.

'Islamic Resistance' Bombs Lahd Militia Building

NC2803122389 (Clandestine) Voice of the People in Arabic to Lebanon 1130 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] In the south, National Resistance fighters have destroyed a 2-story civil administration building belonging to the Lahd militia at the Zummarayya crossing point. Two militia personnel were injured, and a military vehicle was destroyed, according to security sources in the area. The enemy radio said that the building was heavily damaged and that a militia member was injured.

The device planted by the resistance fighters around the building weighed 50 km. It exploded while the militia members returned to the building. The Lahd militia used this building for interrogating those using the Zummarayya crossing point, searching them, and levying taxes on them. The militia used to withdraw from the building every night to a position only 200 meters away and return to it every morning when the crossing point was reopened.

Immediately after the operation, the agent militia combed the surrounding area with artillery and machineguns. Security sources in Rashayya said that a joint Israeli-militia force, estimated at 50 men and supported by 7 military vehicles, advanced 3 km north of the occupied border strip and arrested two persons belonging to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine on suspicion of involvement in the operation.

The Islamic Resistance has issued a statement claiming responsibility for the operation. It said that its resistance fighters detonated the explosive at 0800 today at the Israeli intelligence building at the Zumarayya crossing point. The statement added that the explosion destroyed the building, killed 10 persons inside, destroyed 1 vehicle, and killed the guards defending it.

President al-Asad Interviewed by TIME Magazine

JN2703144489 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 27 Mar 89

["Text" of interview with President Hafiz al-Asad by a TIME magazine team consisting of Karsten Praguer, assistant managing editor and editor of the international edition; John Stacks, assistant managing editor and chief of the correspondents' section; Dean Fischer, director of TIME magazine bureaus in the Middle East; and David Jackson, the magazine's correspondent in the Middle East; in Damascus on 25 March —read by announcer]

[Text] Praguer: Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's visit to the Middle East has attracted attention and focused world concern over the Middle East question anew. At the same time, however, it has indicated a change in the relationship between the Soviet Union and Israel, which meant a change in the relationship with Syria. How do you view this reality and what is Syria's stand on it?

The president: How can you see that as a change in the Soviet Union's relationship with Syria?

Praguer: I believe and presume that any change in the relations between the Soviet Union and Israel means the existence of a change in the other direction.

The president: Not necessarily and no such equation exists.

Praguer: How does the president now view the Soviet Union's interest in the region and influence on the situation in the region?

The president: The Soviet Union has always been interested in the region for many reasons, such as the region's proximity to the Soviet Union. It also always had initiatives in the region. It is natural for the methods of movement to be different from time to time, and from person to person, in terms of form rather than substance. Regarding substance, I do not see the Soviet Union's movement as a new thing. As for the form, such as the Soviet foreign minister's meeting with the Israeli foreign minister in Cairo for instance, this is a new thing. However, we do not expect that the USSR has given Israel anything that might harm Arab rights or their interests.

Praguer: You have explained the matter as if it does not require change, such as a change in the direction of Israel must be matched by a change in the other direction?

The president: Yes, because when the Soviet Union severed its relations with Israel, we were not the ones who demanded the severance of relations. It severed the relations according to its own decision. It found justifications and reasons calling for the severance of these relations. Now, it seems that the Soviet Union has found justifications for holding contacts with Israel. Of course, the Soviet Union is a superpower which has its own policies. But I again say this does not mean a change in its relations with the states with which it has established certain relations.

Praguer: Do you think Gorbachev's current policy differs from that of his predecessors and is it a new policy?

The president: In general he has new ideas and a new internal policy. He has a special external dynamism which is also new. But as far as his relations with his friends and as far as his relations with Syria, we have not found any political change.

Praguer: Do you think he supports your concept of strategic parity with Israel?

The president: I did not discuss this subject with him, because we discussed this matter with the Soviet leadership a long time ago. As I said, I have not found any reasons calling for this discussion. In all cases, strategic parity is our decision and not the decision of the Soviet Union, because we the Arabs are the direct party in the conflict and the Soviet Union is not a direct party. Of course this does not mean it is not concerned, but the conflict, as the world calls it, is an Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Soviet Union stands by the Arabs and supports them. It believes they are defending just stands and working for the liberation of their territories from occupation. It believes the Arabs are the aggrieved party. For this reason, and also because of its proximity to the Middle East, the USSR is concerned about what is taking place in the region.

Praguer: Is the president satisfied with Gorbachev's new policy?

The president: Yes.

Praguer: Some people are not satisfied. This is why I pose the question to the president. Is the president satisfied?

The president: There might be some people who are not satisfied with some policies everywhere, even inside every country. At any rate, we here do not discuss the internal politics of the Soviet Union. It is not our specialty or prerogative. We discuss the external policy. The external policy is seeking detente. This is something for the benefit of everyone, especially in the nuclear age. It also seeks to minimize international tension and arms reduction, especially nuclear arms. What is disturbing about these issues? In reality, everyone was talking about these issues at different times. The Soviet Union had initiatives in this field. Now, however, there is more dynamism.

Stacks: Do you believe, Mr President, that Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan was good?

The president: Issues here are relative. I think they thought it was a good thing. Otherwise, they would not have withdrawn. An outside observer might see things in an opposite way. In any case, I do not recall having discussed this issue with them. However, as is known in world public opinion, whether in our region or other regions, there are those who say their withdrawal is not good. There are also those who say it is good. They have the conviction, as we understood in the past, that the system will continue in Kabul. This we heard from them.

Of course, there are states and individuals in the world who say something different. The first indications show that the system is not weak. As we hear in the news, the opposition has not achieved important gains on the ground to date. The situation in Afghanistan to date indicates the correctness of the Soviet Union's expectations. I am not making predictions.

Praguer: We pose this question to find out whether you think the Soviet Union's behavior toward Afghanistan could form a precedent to its behavior toward other countries. In other words, when you see what happened in Afghanistan you might say the Soviet Union has abandoned one of its allies and the same thing could happen with us.

The president: You all know that at no time did we have Soviet troops.

Praguer: We know that very well. However, what is your opinion on what happened in Afghanistan?

The president: Concerning the arms issue, we have not felt a change. We cannot but assume that Afghanistan is now fighting with Soviet weapons. Therefore, the Soviet Union has withdrawn its troops, but Soviet weapons are still present. The Soviet troop withdrawal is one thing and breaking off relations with friends is another thing. We see that the Soviet Union has withdrawn its troops from Afghanistan. However, at the same time we see that there is a political struggle.

We also see that the Soviet Union stands by Afghanistan, bearing in mind that our situation in Syria is different from that of Afghanistan. The situation is totally different. Nothing calls on the Soviet Union to feel at ease with relations that are not good between it and Syria. It is difficult to assume such an assumption or find logical justifications for such a possibility. Our dealings with the Soviet Union traditionally are that of friends where each respects the will and opinions of the other. Stacks: I would like to ask you about 'Arafat's recent concessions to the United States and about his recognition of Israel. You have publicly criticized 'Arafat and his moves. Do you still think these moves are not helpful in the peace process?

The president: If we had been in his position, we would have adopted another method and if we had seen that his method was the best, we would have pursued it. We have not pursued this course because we do not believe it is the best way to peace. However, we are watching. We want a just peace. So far we have not seen any factor that may reassure us we have approached peace more than ever.

Stacks: U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said in Washington last week—I believe it is the first statement of its kind by the U.S. Administration—that he believes now Israel will be forced to talk to the PLO. This statement annoyed the Israelis. Is not this proof 'Arafat has made progress?

The president: I do not want to discuss 'Arafat as a person or discuss any other person. But it is illogical for us to view such matters from a narrow perspective. A positive or a negative event that meets the aspirations of this or that side may take place in some place. But we have to view this positive or negative event through a number of factors and circumstances that affect it and led to its creation. Is my idea clear enough?

Stacks: Shall I repeat the question?

The president: Why did Baker, not Shultz, make this statement?

Stacks: I do not know.

The president: Because Baker is not Shultz. Consequently, a new U.S. secretary of state with a new vision is a new factor in the issue. There are other changing factors. You have posed the question in light of fixed factors without considering the changing factors. I mention Baker only as an example. There are other factors in the United States, the Arab region, Europe, the Soviet Union, or the socialist countries.

Stacks: Do you see any improvement in relations in the Middle East? In other words, do you feel that as a result of the intifadah [uprising], the situation in the Palestine question has improved? Did the intifadah exercise more pressure on the Israelis?

The president: Certainly, yes. We highly appreciate the intifadah. It is highly appreciated. Through it the Palestinian people epitomize their desires and exercise a legitimate struggle, which should be exercised by any nation whose land is occupied. The intifadah is a great action for the sake of the Palestinian Arab people's rights. It is obvious that it had effects in more than one place in the world; namely, in world public opinion or in amending the positions of some officials.

Praguer: Do you classify the dialogue between the PLO and the United States among the factors that may lead to progress? What I want to say is that there are two developments: The first is the intifadah. The other is the start of dialogue between the PLO and the United States. Do you believe the second development is as important as the first one?

The president: I view it as a positive step.

Fischer: If one looks at the development of the current dialogue between the PLO and the United States, one senses the possibility this dialogue could lead to direct negotiations between the PLO and Israel. Compare this with the president's criticism of the policy of concessions. Do you feel the more this [dialogue] develops the more Syria will be isolated?

The president: No. We do not see any connection between the two issues. Moreover, in light of the conflict between enemies or between two warring countries, relations cannot be viewed in terms of isolation or non-isolation. If we had viewed this issue through this angle and agreed that the policy of concessions would lead to Syria's isolation and that the isolation was so important that it equals or exceeds the essence of conflict between us and the enemy and if we had viewed the issue in this way, Syria would have been able to hold talks.

It is natural that the Israelis will not reject them. Instead, they will welcome them. Egypt extended its hand in the past. Although Egypt is the largest Arab country, Al-Sadat's visit to Jerusalem did not affect our views and decision in Syria. If unilateral moves in the Arab arena had affected us in Syria, Al-Sadat's decision and his visit to Jerusalem would have had a deeper effect. Stacks: Do you believe that in the West Bank and Gaza Strip 'Arafat is viewed as leader of that area?

The president: Certainly there are people who support him and there are people who support others. These matters are no secret to anyone. There are factions in the Palestinian arena and there is more than one view.

Praguer: Syria supports PLO elements which do not support 'Arafat. Given what is taking place now, do you believe Syria has made the right decision?

The president: Syria does not support anyone because of his differences with 'Arafat nor does it have differences with anyone because of his agreement with 'Arafat. Moreover, Syria does not have differences with 'Arafat because he is 'Arafat. We agree politically with anyone whose political line converges with our line and this is up to any state. We have differences with anyone who has differences with us on the political level.

By saying we have differences we do not mean we will declare war against he who has differences with us, but we will have a view while others, who have differences with us, will have another view. Moreover, we have not urged anyone or any faction in the Palestinian arena to have differences with another faction. These factions work in accordance with their own convictions. There are in Syria Palestinian factions which do not have the same view on many issues.

Praguer: Given you describe 'Arafat's policy as one of concessions, if this policy succeeds and yields results, then will the president be pragmatic [preceding word in English] and say: This is good and I will change my mind?

The president: No. Both the objective and the road are inseparable and either one should be in conformity with the other both in form and content.

Stacks: In other words, you still believe 'Arafat has been mistaken.

The president: Whether he does the right or wrong thing, the outcome will be reflected on him. At any rate, our stand on the Palestine question did not begin with the PLO's existence. In fact, our stand existed before the PLO came into being and continued after the PLO came into existence. Syria's traditional stand on the Palestine question has not been linked to the stand of others. In fact, it is linked to Syria's pan-Arab ideology and to its convictions that Israel's aspirations go far beyond Palestine. Therefore, it is difficult to view the Arab-Israeli conflict as being owned by any Arab party.

Stacks: This means the problem is not only the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

The president: It is actually a problem but not the whole problem. It is a problem, the beginning of the problem, and perhaps the heart of the problem. However, the Israelis are aspiring for the establishment of a greater state from the Nile to the Euphrates.

Stacks: But the Israelis maintain the belief Syria wants to establish Greater Syria by annexing Lebanon.

The president: First, Syria does not want to annex Lebanon. Syria supports Lebanon's independence. Second, it seems you have not read the region's history. In the peace conference in 1919, President Wilson did not say the Syrians sought to establish Greater Syria. He said Syria should not be divided and he had differences with his allies. Moreover, he did not say Greater Syria should not be divided because he had never read or heard in his whole life the term Greater Syria.

In fact, he only said Syria because the natural, historic Syria is that Syria which some European officials called Greater Syria after it was divided. Had you read the report of the U.S. committee formed by the peace conference in 1919—the committee of King-Crane, two Americans who were entrusted with visiting Syria to become acquainted with the wishes of inhabitants and who spent months in Syria and afterward they submitted their report warning the allies against the danger of dividing Syria. [sentence incomplete as heard]

This report is present in the archives and can be referred to. In its report, the King-Crane committee said: The multiplicity of sects in Syria constitutes an additional motive for the unity and not the division of the country. This committee was a foreign one, was not a Syrian or Arab committee, and was not against Jews or Zionism. This is one aspect of the subject. Another aspect is that there is no parallel between Syrian-Arab ties and Israeli-Arab ties. For one thing, Syria and Lebanon are part of the Arab nation and their relationship is one between peoples of the same nation with a common language, history, and families.

There is not one Lebanese family that does not have a branch in Syria and vice versa. We have been together since the beginning of time. It is worth noting that the Maronites did not originate in Lebanon but in Syria and Saint Maron counted as Syrian rather than Lebanese. When he died he was buried in the town of Al-Rastan in central Syria. It was in Syria that the first Maronite patriarch was elected.

As for Israel, the story is different. Israel is a strange nation with a different language and history and aspirations lacking homogeneity. Indeed, the Israelis are in conflict with and inimical to the yearnings of the peoples of the region. We the Arabs get stronger when we close ranks as we have in common hopes and pains and destiny. We do not colonize each other.

Syria in its present shape was divided into four ministates by French colonialism and British colonialism: Damascus, Aleppo, southern Syria, and the coast. But the people struggled and united. Is it possible to say they set up Greater Damascus or Greater Aleppo? We say they unified whatever parts they could.

They are one people that unified themselves. We do not seek to build a Greater Syria nor is it our ambition to do that. Our ambition is to achieve the unity of all Arabs. The Syrians are motivated more by their pan-Arabism than by anything else. Our Arab affiliation is deep-rooted and our party is a pan-Arab one and the vast majority of the political parties in the Arab homeland call for Arab unity.

Stacks: Mr President, what is your thinking on the situation in Lebanon?

The president: My thinking is constant and our thinking in Syria has been so since the civil war broke out. The Lebanese must engage in dialogue to reach common denominators. The military conflict is not the sound route. Since we entered Lebanon, we have impressed on all the parties the need for dialogue. We have sought to bridge the gap between the parties.

We have used force only to bring a halt to the civil war and to disengage the combatants. We have never used force to impose a solution on any party. This is because we think the citizens of a given country must, no matter how long it takes, engage in dialogue among themselves and agree on whatever meets their interests.

At times there seemed to be the stirrings of agreement. At other times they reached agreements and put their signatures to them. Then the agreements were sabotaged by new factors. However, they have no other choice. More than 80 percent of the Lebanese are in one camp and less than 20 percent are in another. Notwithstandingly, we see the dialogue as the only way out. In other words, the solution must not come through bloodshed.

Praguer: If we take a realistic look at the situation, we find you have called on the Lebanese to engage in dialogue for 14 years and no one seems to be listening. Does this mean the situation is beyond control and specifically beyond Syria's control?

The president: Undoubtedly, there are regional forces with real vested interests in an unstable Lebanon, especially Israel. Every now and then a minority of people has dealt blows to moves of national accord. When we initiated moves, we have always found responsive people. As I have said, we attained acceptable levels of agreement. Then a group would emerge to sabotage what had been agreed. Nevertheless, we never resorted to force to subdue any group even if it did not fully represent the party it claimed to speak for. That remains our policy.

Some people may ask why we we are pursuing this policy and suggest that we use force to effect a solution. When we first entered Lebanon, that was not our intention. We want to press in the direction of accord and not to impose a solution. To date, this has been our position . Praguer: Is it not more sound to say the Arabs are also interfering in Lebanon's affairs and not only Israel. Reports now say Iraq is very active in Lebanon. Is this true?

The president: Iraq's involvement is something new. Iraq's involvement does not embody a strategic concept as it does not seriously serve Iraq and it does not also seriously serve Lebanon. Iraq's involvement serves neither Iraq nor Lebanon. But Israel's involvement is viewed by the Israelis and others as serving Israel. It goes without saying that this does not serve Lebanon's interests.

Praguer: Do the Iraqis respond to you?

The president: They too are the losers because it is not us who are fighting in Lebanon. We support the Lebanese and do not fight them. Syria's status in Lebanon is different from that of Iraq. This is so because the human relations that exist between Syria and Lebanon do not exist between Iraq and Lebanon. The provision of weapons or funds cannot replace this matter. In another form, the relationship between us and those in Lebanon with whom we deal could be described as a deep-rooted humanitarian relationship and part of the organic relationship. As for Iraq's relationship with some groups in Lebanon, it has no roots.

Praguer: But it suffices to cause many troubles?

The president: It helps to kill more Lebanese. However, with respect to Syria, this is a problem only because Syria is eager to spare the blood of the Lebanese Arab citizens.

Praguer: Do you predict that the day will come when you will withdraw Syrian forces from Lebanon?

The president: Yes, the day will come when we will not need to have Syrian forces in Lebanon because they will certainly reach agreement. When the Lebanese reach agreement, they will establish the appropriate system of government. Thus, there will be a government that represents Lebanon. The Lebanese military, civilian, and political institutions will then assume their responsibilities and play their role. When this takes place, why should we need to have Syrian forces there?

Praguer: Mr President, you have an unshakable faith.

The president: In any case, these are our intentions. Of course, the interferences by others delay and obstruct. However, this day will come. This does not mean we have to depend on fate. We must work. Syria, more than any other Arab country, has an interest in Lebanon's security and in having it return to its normal state of affairs. Syria has a material and emotional interest.

Jackson: The Americans find it difficult to speak about Lebanon without remembering the U.S. and Western hostages. Has Syria any information about the fate of these hostages and is Syria still determined to release the hostages if it can?

The president: Certainly we did our best in the past and will do our best in the future. We view this problem as a humanitarian rather than a political issue. I believe the U.S. and European officials know we exerted great efforts in the past. The issue of hostages is something that does not tolerate risks.

Praguer: In your opinion, what stands in the way of releasing the hostages?

The president: First, we do not know where they are. We also do not know who their captors are. Of course, one can draw one's own conclusions. But no one admits he is holding them. As I said, any miscalculation might lead to the death of the hostages and not to their release. Some of our soldiers were killed for the sake of the hostages. Nevertheless, we did not find the hostages.

Over the past, some successes were scored. We helped in releasing several hostages. But we did not succeed in helping all. We hope we will succeed in the future as we did in the past. We realize the problem is a humanitarian one and should be solved. Of course, if the operation of national accord in Lebanon succeeds, then the road to rescuing the hostages would become very safe. However, this does not mean we must link the action of releasing them to the completion of the national accord operation.

Praguer: Let us discuss the problem of terrorism in its broader sense. There were some suspicions discussed by the media that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command [PFLP-GC] was involved in blowing up the Pan American airliner. Since you support this front, to what extent does its involvement harm Syria's image?

The president: If people were to suspect each other we would have witnessed a war between one state and another everyday. Therefore, it is difficult to suspect or doubt any side. No one has irrefutable evidence of the front's involvement. No one has informed us of the existence of evidence of its involvement and that the front is involved in the Pan American tragedy. What we know is that this front is fighting against Israel, like a number of other Palestinian factions. If any side has anything new, we wish to be informed of it; however, with proof.

Stacks: What happens when the evidence is brought forth?

The president: Then the criminal will be tried, if he committed his crime on our soil. He will be tried like any other person who commits a certain crime. If the criminal is on other people's territory, then they would try him. If it is proven that this act was committed upon request from the front's leadership, then this issue will be dealt with in due time. We have to distinguish between an individual act and an organizational one. When an individual commits an act upon his own decision, he has to bear the responsibility. When an organization decides on an action, it also has to bear the consequences.

I believe it is highly improbable that the PFLP-GC is behind this act, because this front, more than any other Palestinian faction, concentrates on action inside the occupied territories only—that is, in Palestine. They always affirm that fighting the enemy should take place in Palestine.

Stacks: That is to say that Syria supports the acts of the PFLP-GC which it carries out inside Palestine now.

The president: Of course. We also support the intifadah and the other factions. Otherwise, why have a front? Why have the other Palestinian fronts and factions? I mean, what could the Palestinian organizations do if they do not struggle against the occupiers? When the British were colonizing the United States of America did you not fight them? Were you terrorists?

Stacks: They accused us of terrorism.

The president: Despite that, being accused of terrorism did not prevent you from continuing the struggle. This nomenclature here is not valid, because, if we apply it, no nation in the world would have settled down, since most countries were colonized. And if the struggle of each nation is terrorism and terrorism is rejected, then we should not practice it. Therefore, each nation has to offer its colonizer its liberty with its own hands. Are not the PFLP-GC and other Palestinian factions members Palestinian citizens? Have they not been kicked out of their own homes? Why are they not entitled to fight for their own homeland?

Stacks: I say that Syria supports the PFLP-GC because 'Arafat believes that the PFLP-GC's operations across the border are blurring the clarity of the PLO's achievements or the Palestinian people's in the occupied territories and also blurring the clarity of development.

The president: When the French were present in Syria, everyone was struggling in the way he found suitable. Every party and every region resisted. Even in generations, every generation was resisting in its own way. Who can impose on a nation to trace one person or another? At any rate, the acts in the occupied territories are not restricted to one specific faction of the Palestinian factions.

Jackson: You, Mr President, have always been a staunch supporter of Arab unity. Despite this, Syria was the only Arab country that supported Iran against an Arab country - Iraq. Recently, the pro-Iranian Shi'ite factions in Lebanon have created problems for Syria. Why is Syria so close to Iran? Do you not believe Syria now is paying the price for this closeness?

The president: No. We are not paying a price. Before the Iraq-Iran war, we had our differences with those in the Arab arena with whom we currently disagree. The other issue: We supported the Arab stand and nation in the Iraq-Iran war because the war between the Arabs and Iran goes against Arab interests as much as it goes against Iran's interests if not more. In the final analysis, it is in Israel's interest because from our point of view there was nothing to justify this war with Iran. Our talks within the Arab framework have always been down this line.

Through our stand we managed to achieve a great deal for the benefit of the Arabs. As I said, it is not in our—the Arab—or in Iran's interest to fight and inherit mutual grudges over the generations. True, Iraq is an Arab country and we could not avoid the war between Iraq and Iran. I do not wish to specify now where the obstacle was. However, our and other Arab countries' stands during the war will, with time, decrease the state of enmity between Iraq and Iran, in addition to what was achieved during the war in the way of decreasing and preventing great catastrophes that could have occurred.

Stacks: Staying with Iran, I wonder what the president thinks about the Imam Khomeyni's stand on Salman Rushdie's book.

The president: I am not an authority on religion; Ayatollah Khomeyni is a Muslim believer and scholar motivated by the teachings of Islam in which he believes and argues things differently from the way we are now talking. There are Islamic judgments that address such subjects as Salman Rushdie's book. Naturally, we are in no position to discuss such rulings. This is for authorities on the subject. Whatever the religious rules and the formal legal opinion, as a human being Salman Rushdie is bad and his conduct suspicious and he has not exercised his freedom in what he wrote. He has transgressed against the freedom of others.

He has not engaged in an objective discussion of the Islamic faith to arrive at logical conclusions whether pro or anti-Islamic. Had he done that he would be within his rights. But he committed the worst blasphemy against the Islamic faith. What freedom, wisdom, science, or logic is there in writing a book that blasphemes against a religion with 1 billion adherents? If he were a man of letters as some argue, the mission of literature is not to abuse people, even ordinary human beings, and more so when the matter concerns a prophet or holy book and hundreds of millions of people.

I therefore say the book is bad and suspicious and serves no constructive goal. Each of us is entitled to criticize other human beings, but no one has the right to abuse. Had Salman Rushdie been a Syrian national, he would have been tried. His book is extremely bad and he is a liar in what he says. He is either an abnormal person or he must have been charged to write the book by some quarters with vested interests.

Fischer: I would like to ask the president a two-pronged question on Egypt: First, are you prepared to accept Egypt's return to the Arab League? Second, are you prepared to restore diplomatic ties with Egypt?

The president (chuckling): What have you left for the Arab summit to discuss? In any case, the status of our relations with Egypt now may be called positive. As for Egypt's return to the Arab League, this is a subject for the Arab summit where we will make our position known.

Praguer: Which means you will make Syria's position known at the summit rather than prior to it. So there will be a summit and you will be there?

The president: There must be a summit. There is no time limit, but the Arab summit is held every now and then. Sometimes the interval between one summit and the next is long and sometimes it is short.

Fischer: And the second part of the question concerning diplomatic ties with Egypt. Do you see relations restored before long or will you wait for the Arab summit?

The president: The subject is premature. But the Arabs will eventually be in the same trench. I am speaking on the strength of Arab history. We have had our many disagreements and been through complex and grave circumstances and took our spearate ways even in serious historic conflicts. We then would close ranks and achieve our goals together.

Praguer: I would like to ask you a personal question. You have been at the helm for the last 18 years in this country. Syria's name has been synonymous with Al-Asad. When we look at the future, your health must be taken into account. You seem to be in very good health. What will happen to Syria after Al-Asad? I am sorry if the question bothers you.

The president: The question does not bother me. This question is legitimate. Syria has existed for a long time. Syria exists now and will continue to exist in the future. Since the first day we took power, we have always looked ahead. We have long worked to build the constitutional bodies and popular organizations and to develop cooperation among the political parties. We have worked to build a generation free of anxiety with a will and mind of its own—a mind that can think and choose with tranquillity.

We have the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and it is of long standing and entrenched among the masses. We have official and popular establishments and constitutional and legislative provisions that will meet all possibilities.

Al-Asad Receives Lebanon's Franjiyah, Son

JN2603201589 Damascus Television Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Text] At 2000 today, President Hafiz al-Asad received former Lebanese President Sulayman Franjiyah and his son, Robert Franjiyah. Talks dealt with the situation in the Lebanese arena.

Sulayman Franjiyah arrived in Damascus this evening, accompanied by his son, Robert Franjiyah. Franjiyah was welcomed by Wahib Fadil, minister of state for presidential affairs.

Talas Begins Talks With USSR Defense Minister

JN2703202589 Damascus Television Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Excerpt] General Mustafa Talas, deputy commander in chief of the Army and Armed Forces, deputy prime minister, and defense minister, this evening received Soviet Defense Minister Dmitriy Yazov and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by Gen Hikmat al-Shihabi, chief of staff of the Army and Armed Forces, and Gen 'Ali Aslan and Gen Hasan Turkmani, deputy chiefs of staff of the Army and Armed Forces, and the Soviet ambassador in Damascus.

The talks dealt with the relations of friendship and close cooperation which exist between the two friendly armies and ways of promoting them.

The official talks between Gen Mustafa Talas and Dimitriy Yazov have started. Gen Hikmat al-Shihabi, chief of staff of the Army and the Armed Forces, and Gen 'Ali Aslan and Gen Hasan Turkmani, and other ranking officers from the General Command participated in the talks on the Syrian side. The members of the delegation accompanying the Soviet defense minister and the Soviet ambassador in Damascus participated in the talks on the Soviet side.

The guest delegation arrived at Damascus International Airport at noon today. [passage omitted]

TISHRIN Cited on 'Treachery' of 'Awn

JN2603081289 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0545 GMT 26 Mar 89

[From the press review]

[Text] In the "Behind the News" column and under the headline "Lebanon Is Capable of Ending the Tyranny," the newspaper TISHRIN says: Michel 'Awn, head of the two minister coupist military government, said with obvious nervousness: Let Beirut be destroyed for the ninth time. 'Awn is determined to liberate Lebanon not from the Israelis, who are occupying a part of southern Lebanon and launching disciplinary campaigns against the defenseless villages, but from the Lebanese people and the Syrian forces, which are providing the Lebanese people with safety and security.

Hence, according to his liberation plan, 'Awn had to start the fires of the war, shell Beirut, its southern suburb, and Al-Biqa' and bring about the displacement of their Lebanese residents.

The paper adds: Any simple observer is bound to wonder: Why does 'Awn have to destroy Beirut and the other Lebanese cities and areas if he is looking for a solution to the Lebanese crisis? Would it not be more useful and easier for him to resort to the more useful remedy, the remedy of national reconciliation, the remedy of unifying the Lebanese instead of killing, exterminating, and evacuating them? These questions are legitimate, as this is the remedy which would help spread affection, friendliness, and coexistence and realize political, social, and economic reforms which the Lebanese have been struggling to see for long years.

TISHRIN asks: Would it not be more useful and easier for 'Awn to resort to the option of civilized dialogue and to recognize that justice, equality, and equal opportunities are now taken for granted in this age and that they are enshrined in all constitutions of the world? Would it not be more useful and easier for 'Awn to recognize that the majority of the Lebanese people are yearning for change and that the genuine ruler is the one who responds favorably to the people's will and not the one who is bent on oppression, killing, and destruction and who harbors enmity toward the people, their hopes, and aspirations.

Concluding its article, the paper says: 'Awn, whose statements declare war on the Syrian presence and Syria's pan-Arab redemptive initiative, is actually declaring war on the Lebanese people and their struggle and sacrifices and also on their persistent efforts to unify Lebanon, safeguard its Arabism, and realize reconciliation among its sons on the basis of justice and equality.

'Awn is not after a solution to the crisis. Nay, he is after further explosions in Lebanon to appease his Israeli masters. However, treachery will get him nowhere and Lebanon is capable of ending his tyranny.

Afghanistan

Kabul-Mujahidin Fighting in Jalalabad Continues

4 Helicopters Shot Down

BK2703154389 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] In Afghanistan, the mujahidin have launched a fresh offensive against Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar Province, which has been under a siege for the past 3 weeks. The new offensive, which was launched on Saturday [25 March], has been confirmed by the Kabul regime. Reports of fierce fighting have also been received from Jalalabad city, the airport, Behsud, Daruntah, and Sorkh Rud. The mujahidin burned three arms and ammunition depots in the airport area and two oil depots in the Behsud area. A total of 53 Kabul regime soldiers were killed and 98 wounded, and the mujahidin captured several posts.

The Kabul regime military aircraft carried out heavy bombing raids to end mujahidin pressure. The mujahidin shot down four helicopters and another aircraft with the help of Stinger missiles in Jalalabad city, Tangay, and (Khoshokabad) areas. They also captured eight posts along with a large quantity of arms and ammunition in the area. They ambushed a Kabul regime convoy and destroyed 150 vehicles along with the ammunition.

In Kabol Province, the mujahidin captured a post with arms and ammunition and damaged a tank in the Arghandab area. They are also increasing pressure around Qalat city and the airport. They attacked the posts at Towr Kowtal and captured two of them. They are also reported to have intensified their operations in Paktia and Sar-e Pol.

A Kabul regime spokesman confirmed severe bombing raids on Jalalabad and said that a large quantity of arms, including two tanks, were destroyed.

190 Rebels Reported Killed

LD2703153189 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1430 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] An authoritative Armed Forces source told the BAKHTAR military section that the security situation in most of the country's provinces is normal. Units and formations are fortifying their current positions.

On the military situation in Nangarhar, the source said that the attacks by the joint forces of the Pakistanis and armed extremist groups have been reduced somewhat but heavy weapons and rocket attacks on the city's residential areas continue. As many as 5 civilians and soldiers were martyred and 14 others, including women and children, were injured. Three houses were destroyed. As a result of return fire by the Afghan artillery, 190 armed people, including Pakistani militia and regular forces members were killed and 70 were wounded. Pakistani and Arab advisers and a number of extremist group commanders are among the dead. Five enemy missiles, tens of heavy and light arms, and two vehicles loaded with arms and ammunition were destroyed.

According to another report, as many as six armed persons linked with Pakistan were killed as a result of an Afghan Armed Forces ambush. Four people were injured and 10 were captured. An enemy vehicle and an arms and ammunition cache were captured by the Afghan Armed Forces.

As many as 14 people connected to Pakistan, including their 2 commanders, were killed as a result of a clearing-up operation in eastern Herat Province.

Similarly, groups connected with Pakistan launched rocket attacks on Khowst in Paktia and the Konduz city area. As a result, one member of the Armed Forces was martyred and four civilians were wounded. According to another report, 7 extremists were killed and 10 were wounded as a result of Armed Forces strikes.

Rebels Fire on 'Civilians'

LD2703173289 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Two shocking acts were committed yesterday and the day before by Pakistan-backed armed groups. The BAKHTAR military section reports that armed groups linked to Pakistan, in a ruthless and cowardly manner fired light and heavy weapons on vehicles carrying civilians from Jalalabad to Kabul. As a result of this criminal act of the looter groups, as many as 21 passengers were killed and 31 others injured. All the martyrs and injured were defenseless children, women, and elderly men.

This criminal act took place at a time when Pakistani forces and extremists connected with them have faced consistent defeat as a result of the crushing strikes of the heroic Armed Forces of the Republic of Afghanistan. They wanted to revenge themselves upon the defenseless children, women, and old men of Jalalabad with this inhuman and un-Islamic crime, and to please their Pakistani masters.

The martyrs and injured were taken to Kabul and the wounded are under treatment in Kabul hospitals. The report adds that the Republic of Afghanistan Armed Forces took action to crush the murderers and have inflicted heavy blows on their positions. As a result of this operation, tens of criminals and murderers were killed. Mopping-up operations continue.

Bangladesh

New Barter Protocol Signed With USSR
BK2703162189 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Bangladesh and the Soviet Union signed a new barter protocol in Dhaka today. Bangladesh will export goods worth 21 million pounds sterling, while its imports from the Soviet Union will be worth 19 million pounds sterling.

Under the new protocol, Bangladesh will export for the first time telephone cables, handicraft, and sports shoes to the Soviet Union. The other exports will include raw jute and jute goods, semi-finished and finished leather, ready-made garments, and tea.

The Soviet Union will export to Bangladesh machinery equipment, (?steel rods), tires and tubes, and high-speed diesels.

The protocol was signed by visiting Soviet Deputy Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Vladimir Vladimirovich Martynov and Commerce Secretary Khurshid Alam.

India

Report on Mrs Gandhi's Assassination Indicts 20
BK2703125789 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] The Thakkar Commission [which investigated Indira Gandhi's assassination] has indicted over 20 officials concerned with the security of the late prime minister, Indira Gandhi, and said her assassination could have been averted if the officials responsible for her protection had done the job properly. The commission's report, along with the appendices as submitted by Justice Thakkar to the Government, were tabled in both houses of parliament this afternoon.

The report maintains that top officials appear to have taken things for granted. In a 15-page section the report describes the sequence of events leading to the assassination and pinpoints lapses on the part of several officials responsible for the prime minister's security. The report also investigated the security set up around the prime minister as it existed in 1984 and made far-reaching recommendations to rectify shortcomings.

The commission also examined the role of others and the possibility of a conspiracy or involvement of foreign interests in the crime.

The report specifically mentions four lapses and says but for these the crime could have been averted. The lapses include countermanding of the decision to remove the Sikh security personnel from Mrs Gandhi's close proximity by Mr R.K. Dhawan [Mrs Gandhi's special assistant] in the name of the prime minister, and superior officers agreeing to the request of Beant Singh and Satwant Singh [convicted of assassinating Mrs Gandhi] to change the duty times and beats.

The report says apart from shortcomings in the security system, there were also failures in providing emergency medical aid at the prime minister's house.

The Thakkar Commission also examined the possible involvement of persons other than those directly accused in the crime. Among them is Mrs Gandhi's special assistant R.K. Dhawan. The commission says during its exploratory exercise it gathered certain material on the basis of which it formed the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to suspect Mr Dhawan's involvement in the crime. However, it is specifically pointed out that the report is a pre-enquiry investigative exercise and not an enquiry under section 8-B of the Commission of Enquiry Act.

The government says that a probe was made by a special investigating team and it concluded that Mr Dhawan had no hand in the conspiracy. This is stated in a memorandum of action taken which is also tabled along with the Thakkar Commission's report.

Moving the resolution to facilitate the tabling of the report in the Lok Sabha, the home minister, Mr Buta Singh, said that the special investigation team has completed its investigations and unravelled the conspiracy to eliminate Mrs Gandhi. Action will be taken according to law against those who have been identified by the team as having part in the conspiracy.

The house witnessed noisy scenes and heated exchanges as the home minister laid the reports on the table of the house and earlier during the zero hour. The main objection of the opposition members was that the supplementary list of business made no mention that the annexures to the report will be laid on the table of the house.

Further on Commission Report
BK2703162589 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Excerpts] The Thakkar Commission, which enquired into Mrs Gandhi's assassination, has indicted over 20 officials who were concerned with her security and said that the assassination could have been averted if the officials responsible for saving her had done their job properly. The commission's report, along with the appendices submitted by Justice Thakkar to the government, were tabled in both houses of Parliament this afternoon. [passage omitted]

Some of the senior officials the commission has indicted are Mr R.N. Kao, who was then a senior adviser in the Cabinet Secretariat; Delhi's Police Commissioner Mr S.C. Tandon; a joint director in the Intelligence Bureau, Mr S. Ramamurthy; additional commissioner of police, Mr H.D. Pillay; deputy commissioner of police, Mr G.R. Gupta; the prime minister's personal security officer; and Mr D.K. Bhatt.

The report says that apart from some shortcomings in the prime minister's security system, there were also failures in providing emergency medical aid at Mrs Gandhi's house. There was a delay in calling consultants at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences when Mrs Gandhi was taken there. However, the commission also records that in the opinion of the experts this would not have made any difference to Mrs Gandhi chances of recovery in view of the nature of her injuries. It says according to six distinguished surgeons consulted by the commission Mrs Gandhi received the best attention at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and everything was done in the best possible manner. [passage omitted]

Moving the resolution to facilitate the tabling of the report in the Lok Sabha this afternoon, the home minister, Mr Buta Singh, said that a Special Investigation Team [SIT] has completed its investigations and unravelled the conspiracy to assassinate Mrs Gandhi. Action will be taken according to law against those who have been identified by the team as having taken part in the conspiracy. Mr Singh said the team investigated the matter thoroughly for more than 4 years. Since the team has now completed the task, there is no longer any bar to releasing the Thakkar Commission report.

The home minister explained that the government had decided not to release the report earlier in the larger public interest. Its action was supported by a law made by Parliament and, by and large, the nation also accepted the decision. There has not been any criticism or controversy for 3 years. During this period the SIT also carried out its investigation with quiet efficiency and thoroughness. The team's efforts led to the prosecution and conviction of the assailants and also of those directly connected with Mrs Gandhi's assassination. Other supporters have also been identified.

Mr Buta Singh said the team completed its investigation in January and was preparing to prosecute the people involved in the larger conspiracy. The home minister said once the SIT had completed the requirements prescribed by law, the government would have in a normal course placed the report before the House. However, at this stage a version of a chapter of the commission's report appeared in a newspaper starting an unnecessary and painful controversy.

To set at rest rumormongering and speculative discussion, the government decided to lay the report on the table of the House. In spite of this, a section of the media and some political leaders have continued to indulge in speculation, insinuation, and innuendo. In the last 10 days they have even attributed motives to the government and tried to bring into ridicule the institutions of the state and those holding responsible positions in the Government. He said when the reports are read by reasonable men and women, the truth will be known and the utter depravity of the campaign launched by certain sections will stand exposed.

The House witnessed noisy scenes and heated exchanges as the home minister laid the report on the table of the House and also earlier during zero hour. The home minister announced that he is laying on the table of the House the interim report and the final report along with the appendices and the memorandum of action taken on the two reports. The opposition members raised several points of order which were, however, disallowed by the speaker.

Opposition Demands 'Full Text'

BK2803091489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] The Thakkar Commission report again figured in both houses of Parliament today as the opposition members alleged that the full text of the report has not been tabled. They also demanded that the copies of the report should be made available to all the members immediately. The issue figured during the zero hour.

In the Lok Sabha, the speaker, Mr Balram Jakhar, told Mr Madhu Dandavate, Janata, that his privilege notice on the subject has been received by him and he has already initiated action. While the opposition members insisted time and again on raising the issue, several ruling party members, including some of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagham members, wanted to draw the attention of the speaker to the incidents which took place in the Tamil Nadu Assembly. The speaker told them that it is a state subject and cannot be raised in the house.

The Lok Sabha witnessed noisy scenes and heated exchanges for about 30 minutes as the opposition and the ruling party members persisted with their point despite pleas by the speaker to restore order. Mr Jakhar told the members that as they are not allowing him to proceed with the business, he is adjourning the house till 1400.

In the Rajya Sabha, raising the issue, Mr L.K. Advani, Bharatiya Janata Party, wanted the government to clarify the position in regard to volumes—he alleged—[that] have not been tabled. He also demanded that the report of the special investigation team be presented to Parliament. Mr Gurupadaswamy, Janata, said that laying of a partial report raises an important issue of privileges. Mr Madan Bhatia of the Congress-I, however, doubted the validity of the points made by Mr Advani and Mr Gurupadaswamy. He said the show-cause notices and the response to them cannot be equated with the report.

The deputy chairman, Mrs Najma Heptullah, assured the members that any member who wants to read the report will not be denied this privilege. She said very soon at least 100 copies will be made available.

Tamil Nadu Chief Meets Sri Lankan Minister

BK2703124089 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1207 GMT 27 Mar 89

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, 27 Mar (LANKAPUVATH)—In spite of a difficult and stormy session of the Tamil Nadu Assembly yesterday (Saturday March 25th), Chief Minister Dr. M. Karunanidhi kept his appointment with Mr. S. Thondaman, Sri Lanka's minister of textiles and rural industrial development, in the afternoon. Many had thought that the appointment would be postponed, but in view of the fact that Mr. Thondaman had planned to return to Colombo in the evening, Dr. Karunanidhi had made it a point to have a long discussion with him, states a press release issued today by the Ministry of Rural Industrial Development.

The press release further states that Dr. Karunanidhi had wanted a detailed evaluation and assessment of the situation among the Tamils in the north and east of Sri Lanka, and after Mr. Thondaman had given a confidential analysis of the present position, the Tamil Nadu chief minister wanted time to think over what he had been told and said he would like to continue the discussion on the subject when Mr. Thondaman was next in Madras.

The Sri Lanka minister also took the opportunity to tell the Tamil Nadu chief minister that of the 70,000 Indian Tamil families repatriated under the Srima-Sashtri Pact, only about 10,000 families had been properly rehabilitated and that the balance were virtually destitute. He urged Mr. Karunanidhi to look into the matter and do everything possible to relieve their distress.

He also informed the chief minister that he would be taking up with the Indian Government a matter which was now under discussion between the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) and the Sri Lankan Government regarding the 80,000 Indian passport holders now in Sri Lanka and the 70,000 to 80,000 who had applied for Indian citizenship. A large number of them had no desire to return to India.

There were in India now a very large number of Sri Lankan citizens, mainly of Indian origin, who were now resident in India and were anxious to obtain Indian citizenship. Without disturbing the total number of Sri Lanka citizens of Indian origin, it would be a humanitarian act to arrange for an exchange of such persons and resolve the problem of their citizenship, Mr. Thondaman told [as received]. Dr. Karunanidhi assured Mr. Thondaman that he would look into both these matters.

5 'Terrorists,' 1 Policeman Killed in Punjab

BK2803051289 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0435 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] In Punjab, five hard-core terrorists and an assistant subinspector of police have been killed in separate encounters since yesterday evening. According to an official spokesman, three terrorists and an assistant subinspector of police were killed near Vir Baba Buddha College at Chabal in Amritsar District. The encounters followed information that five terrorists were hiding there. The scuffle, which started in the evening, continued till late at night. A large quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered.

In Gurdaspur District, a terrorist was killed in an encounter with the police in Batala City last evening. An accomplice of the killed terrorist, who managed to escape, was chased by the police and later killed in an encounter near village (Puner).

Low-Flying Aircraft Radar Dedicated to Nation

BK2603090489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Text] India's first high-tech low-flying aircraft detection radar—Indra-1—has been dedicated to the nation. The defense minister, Mr K.C. Pant, handed over the radar to the Air Force in Sahebabad in Uttar Pradesh today. With this, the country has attained the third position in the world to induct an indigenously-manufactured radar which can handle 40 enemy aircraft and 12 weapon systems simultaneously.

Designed and developed jointly by the Bharat Electronics Limited and the Electronics Research and Development Establishment, Indra is of a type made only by two other countries in the world—the United States and France.

Commentary on U.S. Plan for Latin American Debt

BK2703105889 Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Unattributed commentary: "The New Debt Strategy of the United States"]

[Text] A new American plan to reduce the stock of commercial debt of heavily indebted developing nations, mainly in Latin America, is now before finance ministers and central bankers who will be meeting in Washington next week. This plan put forward by the treasury secretary, Mr Nicholas Brady, early this month follows a review undertaken by the Bush administration of the debt strategy called the Baker Plan. The plan did not work as commercial banks did not provide the expected financing to the indebted countries which were forced to adopt tough measures of adjustment.

Most countries of this region [Latin America] have experienced sharp fall in per capita income in the eighties on account of crushing debt burden, and are in the grip of social and political tensions. These countries owe commercial banks about $300 billion and debt servicing at current high rate interests have compounded their problems.

Mr Brady proposed that banks should reduce the stock of debt of each country to roughly its depressed market value as already banks were providing for losses on their loans in their balance sheets. The debt reduction would be voluntarily negotiated between the bank and the country, and to sell the idea to the banks Mr Brady wants IMF and the World Bank to guarantee repayment of the discounted debts. A part of the policy-based loans given by these institutions to the indebted countries would be used to collateralize either in principle or by slashing interest.

This is the first time that the U.S. Administration is prepared to countenance partial write offs of debts without transferring the risk from private lenders to official creditors. U.S. officials say the proposals would help to effect at least a 20 percent reduction in the stock of debt. Japan has announced it supports the U.S. proposal and would provide supportive finance. The IMF Interim Committee and the World Bank's Development Committee on April 3d and 4th will focus on the debt problem, although the agenda has other major items such as review of world economic situation, increase in quotas of member countries of IMF to expand its resource base, and the question of allocation of Special Drawing Rights [SDR] to augment the reserves for international transactions.

While some industrial countries are willing to support the Brady Plan for debt reduction, the IMF managing director, Mr Camdessus, has said that IMF can play its part only if its resources are substantially enlarged, say by doubling of the present quotas of member countries. But many countries would also want to know that the capacity of the fund and the World Bank to help other needy countries would not in anyway suffer by them being involved in the debt reduction strategy.

In 1988 the world economy registered strong growth. World trade rose by 8.5 percent, the highest rate of growth after 1984 and there was relative stability in exchange rates. But in the early months of 1989, there are signs of rise in consumer prices in industrial countries leading to raising of interest rates to hold down growth in demand. Output is expected to slow down by 4 to 3 percent in industrial countries. Although, developing countries did better in 1988, their current account deficit widened and many of them are facing payments difficulties.

India and other developing countries will urge developed nations at next week's meetings to ensure that they secure better access to markets of industrial countries for their exports and more concessional resources in order to grow out of debt burdens. While Mr Brady's proposals apply mainly to Latin America where the United States has a vital stake as a market for its exports, the case for a broader approach to the debt problem of the Third World as a whole has been ignored. India and other countries are, therefore, expected to tell industrial nations that any debt reduction strategy must also provide for the needs of low-income countries whose debts are growing.

In regard to the revision of IMF quotas, developing countries have advocated doubling of the present quotas totalling SDR $90 billion. Some of the leading industrial countries are only willing to support a 50 percent increase. Once again a decision will be deferred on special allocation of SDR which developing countries have been demanding throughout the eighties in order to augment their liquidity, while industrial nations oppose it on the grounds that it would add to the inflationary pressures.

Editorial Calls U.S. Position on Tibet 'Sham'

BK2503104289 Delhi PATRIOT in English
9 Mar 89 p 4

[Editorial: "Tibet and the U.S."]

[Text] There have been periodic eruptions of anti-China riots in Tibet in recent years. Last week's riots are the second of the kind this year. The central Chinese authorities must be worried about the continuance of violence despite the imposition of martial law. There is a strong urge among the Tibetan people that the Tibet should retain and develop their own religious and cultural identities. Tibet's autonomy has long been a problem and the Chinese authorities, successively, have acknowledged the existence of this issue. But the sudden spurt of US interest in the "violation of human rights" in Tibet causes amazement, as though Tibet's question was not there during the years of Sino-US strategic consensus against the USSR.

Curiously, the Western media have taken a renewed interest in Tibet at a time when Sino-Soviet relations are being mended for normalisation. Washington wanted (and possibly wants) the best possible relations with China for strategic, political and commercial reasons. However, the improvement in Sino-Soviet relations may tempt some to question the viability and durability of the once-close Sino-US relationship directed against the Soviet Union. At the heart of the matter is Washington's previous belief that the "China card" would remain available against the USSR. This belief is not being sustained by the Soviets peace policy in Asia.

Thus the protests about Tibet petered out when President Richard Nixon scaled the Great Wall of China to unfold a great new romance in foreign relations. The convergence of views on wide ranging issues from Afghanistan to Kampuchea to Angola between Washington and Beijing, US administrations discovered, had enormous advantages in terms of having a billion people ranged against the Soviets. In fact, by visiting Beijing before Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Mr George Bush has shown his nervousness over the radical shift in Sino-Soviet relations.

Political unrest in Tibet has the potential of creating an adverse impact in China. Beijing has often blamed foreign intelligence agencies for aiding and abetting counter-revolutionary groups in Tibet. According to New York-based Covert Action Information Bulletin, US intelligence agencies had organised, funded and trained anti-Chinese groups in Tibet long before Nicaragua's contra war was invented.

In 1987 the US Senate passed a resolution condemning China's human rights violations in Tibet and even linked the future provision of defence articles and services to China to presidential certificates [as published] to the effect that human rights situation in Tibet had improved. Past experience shows that the US Administration has not found it difficult to contort itself out of such inconvenient situations. By keeping pressure on the Chinese as far as Tibet is concerned, Washington may be indirectly seeking Beijing's assurance that Sino-US ties would not be weakened. The cry of human rights violations, as is often case in great power diplomacy, is sham.

Bangladesh Urged To Resolve Refugee Issue

BK2703114489 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 21 Mar 88 p 13

[Editorial: "Dhaka and Chakmas"]

[Text] If the Bills the Bangladesh Parliament passed three weeks ago to grant limited autonomy to the Chittagong Hill Tract district of Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari have failed to persuade the Chakma refugees in India to return home, the reason may neither be the tribals' militant wing, the Shanti Bahini, nor India's alleged ulterior motive. Many people in Bangladesh tend to convince themselves that India wishes to play the Chakma card to pressurise [as published] Dhaka, and it encourages the Shanti Bahini for the purpose. Except for Bangladesh's paranoia, there is no other reason to support the view that India can gain in any way by enticing 20,000 tribal refugees away, and spending money on their upkeep.

The truth is that Dhaka pursued a series of wrong policies towards the tribals since the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. During Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's secular rule, Dhaka worked out an equation with the Chakmas who are predominantly Buddhists. Chakma MP [Member of Parliament] Manabendra Narayan Larma emerged as a vocal defender of tribal rights. This fledgling relationship was ruptured by the military coup in 1975, subsequent waves of repression of the tribals and, finally, a deliberate policy to settle plainsmen in the hill areas at the cost of the tribals. What might have been achieved through a policy of understanding and sympathy was sought to be secured through force. Inevitably, the tribals and the Bengalis drifted apart.

President Ershad appointed a committee headed by Planning Minister A.K. Khandoker to find out a solution to the hill tract issue. The three Bills providing for local government councils with two-third representation reserved for the tribals are a result of the committee's work. Mr Khandoker had 29 meetings with tribal leaders in two years to suggest a political solution. Talks have also been held with the Shanti Bahini, though little headway seems to have been made.

Dhaka and the media in Bangladesh should resist the temptation of seeing the hidden Indian hand as the cause of abortive discussions. It is the moral obligation of Bangladesh to convince the Chakma refugees in India that the proposed autonomy scheme would provide them safety and honour, and a say in their own destiny. Neither insinuations against India nor wild reports of alleged Indian troop concentration on the Bangladesh borders would open the bridge of understanding between the Chakma refugees and the authorities in Dhaka. Bangladesh must win over the mind and heart of the Chakma tribals.

Article Reviews Aspects of Defense Budget Cut

BK2503113289 Delhi PATRIOT in English 9 Mar 89 p 4

[Article by Cecil Victor: "Defence Budget: A Bit of Hocus-Pocus?"]

[Text] The budget allocation of Rs [rupees] 13000 crore for Defence in 1989-90, less as it is by Rs 200 crore compared to the revised estimates of the previous year, is being made out to be a great exercise in restraint. Obliquely, it is a riposte to the demand made on the occasion of the presentation of the 1987-88 budget that the military budget must be at least contained if not actually slashed. But it is pregnant with the possibility that it will be revised upwards before the year is out.

After making allowances for inflation, in very real terms the defence outlay is almost back to the level of 1987-88 when it was raised by 20 percent to Rs 12,500 crore in one great leap because of the prevailing security situation. That budget can be taken as the high-watermark because it boosted the military modernisation programme which brought such high-tech weaponry as the Mirage fighter aircraft, the IL-76 heavy lift and AN-32 medium transport aircraft, the Bofors 155 mm howitzer, the BMP-2 infantry combat vehicles, the T-72 main battle tanks, modified Kashin class destroyers, SSK submarines, Kilo class submarines and the Chakra nuclear-powered submarine, new missile boats, (among others) into the Indian arsenal.

It was, in all respects a massive injection. The fact that that level of budgetary support continued into 1988-89 to finance military modernisation is generally forgotten. The cut of Rs 200 crore from the revised estimates of last year is, therefore, plainly cosmetic. Attempts by the military lobby to portray the cut as seriously affecting the defence effort must be seen in this light.

However, it is not as if there are no disturbing trends in the defence outlay. The erratic nature of the utilisation of funds for research and development ought to be cause for concern. They outlay for R and D [research and development] is tucked into the Army account. In the budget estimates for 1988-89 Rs 561.60 crore was provided of which only Rs 498.65 crore was utilised. This year Rs 533.46 crore has been provided which is lower by more than Rs 30 crore from even the budget estimates of last year.

Parliamentarians and those few Indians who appear concerned with the overdependence of the Indian military establishment on imports of the entire range of military hardware every other decade would do well to examine whether this is the cause or the result of an undernourished (whether deliberate or otherwise) R and D setup. While it is conceded the R and D is not a sausage factory, it is time Indians understood the cause and effect and the linkages between a deliberately exacerbated security environment and our dependence on foreign supplies of military hardware (and the consequent political detabilisation that takes place re: the Bofors and submarine deals). Undernourishment, in this case, is not only on account of funds but also of such other inputs as will-power, sagacity in choice of projects, etc.

Another is the steady decline in the outlay for ordnance factories. The amount earmarked has slipped to Rs 44 crore in 1988-89, rose to Rs 71.00 crore in the revised estimates and fell to 19.73 crore in 1989-90. The capital outlay in 1987-88 was Rs 680 crore but it came down to Rs 338 crore in the next year but only Rs 311 crore was utilised in the revised estimates. Rs 360 crore has been provided for the coming year. The heavy investment of 1987-88 could be attributed to the purchase of machinery and equipment for the new lines of production that were required to be set up. The capital outlay appears to have steadied at Rs 300 crore plus.

It is no mean investment but has it been utilised to maximum capacity? Only now there are signs of a realisation that the vast investment should be made to pay for itself through exports but there are also signs (as in the case of the defence public sector undertaking Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd which produced a trainer aircraft for export without first finding out who will buy it and has not sold any yet) that there is no clear picture on how it is going to be done. (The Prime Minister is reported to have said that he would talk to Defence Minister K.C. Pant in this regard). Ordnance factories are, at once, the engine for self-reliance and a potent tool for making national defence cost-effective. The buzzword in the new budget is cost-effectiveness but there are no indications that ordnance factories are the foundations of the new strategy.

Because the budget for 1989-90 shows a cut in defence spending of Rs 200 crore over the revised estimate of the previous year is, per se, no cause for rejoicing among those who had hoped that the twin objectives of cost effective defence and self-reliance could be achieved in the perceivable future. This is mainly because the cuts have been made in pay and allowances of the three Services. The largest cut is in the Army budget under this head. Rs 270.58 crore less than the revised estimate for 1988-89 (Rs 2344.49 crore) and the budget provision for the next financial year (Rs 2358.97 crore) it is clear that the normal escalation for annual increments has been provided for.

What has been slashed is Rs 270 crore which suddenly appeared in the revised estimates for last year. Such a large amount could only be on account of payment of some large backlog (such as arrears of pay commission recommendations, allowances kept in abeyance pending Government clearance, or the foreign allowance sanctioned to Indian troops for action in Sri Lanka and the Maldives).

So far as the foreign allowance is concerned, it is calculated at 25 percent of pay given in rupees to jawans [soldiers] and officers stationed in Sri Lanka or the Maldives (during the course of the operation). At the most this allowance for one lakh personnel (at the height of the operation to about 55,000 before the withdrawals began) would not cross Rs 50 crore over a full year. The present deployment read with a gradual withdrawal will not cost the exchequer more than Rs 2 crore per month. The arrears of pay commission commitments too could not have been large than this figure.

By slashing Rs 200 crore from the defence outlay, the Government has not catered for the IPKF [Indian Peacekeeping Force] foreign allowance for even half the present deployment for the next three months. Which is why there is a distinct possibility that the defence budget will be revised before the year ends.

Iran

Mahallati Resigns; No Effect Seen on Peace Talks

NC2803140589 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran's delegation at the United Nations issued a statement confirming the resignation of the Iranian UN envoy. According to a report received, the diplomats of the Islamic Republic of Iran's delegation at the United Nations stressed that Mohammad Ja'far Mahallati's resignation from his post as the representative of Islamic Republic of Iran to this organization will have no effect on the peace talks between Iran and Iraq in the United Nations. Even the date for the talks scheduled between the Islamic Republic of Iran's technical group with the UN secretary general's office will not undergo any change. This group is to visit New York on 6-7 April for talks.

Foreign Ministry Deplores Lebanon Situation

LD2703165389 Tehran IRNA in English 1630 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Tehran, March 27, IRNA—Iran's Foreign Ministry today denounced the bombardment of Beirut's Muslim sector by the Phalangist militia and Maronites, and said it threatens the integrity of Lebanon.

In an official communique the Ministry deplored the killing of Muslims and Christians in Lebanon, and voiced support for Syria's role in the strife-torn country.

It said the Zionist regime, the U.S., and imperialist elements as well as those pretending the right to rule in Lebanon are responsible for the killing of innocent citizens.

The communique also deplored the role of "certain Arab states" in exploiting the situation in Lebanon "for purely opportunistic goals."

The renegade Michel 'Awn allied with Samir Ja'ja''s troops has continued to rain fire on Beirut's Muslim areas since a fortnight, killing over a hundred citizens and injuring several others.

In a press conference last Friday, 'Awn who heavily depends on Ba'thist Baghdad for his arms supply, admitted the presence of U.S. advisors in his camp.

Commentary Says Lebanon Headed for 'Total Crisis'

LD2603212789 Tehran in English to Europe
1953 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Political commentary entitled "Lebanon on the Verge of a Total Crisis"]

[Text] Although the events of the past 2 weeks in Lebanon have not had any appreciable reflection in the precise designs of the Western and Zionist media, a roundup of the measures adopted so far indicates that the dimensions of the recent plot in that country are far more calculated and vaster than the ones in the past.

The well planned move by Michel 'Awn in declaring a war against the Syrian Army and also the savage and extensive shelling of Muslim localities in Beirut fall within the design aimed at creating a total crisis in that war torn country.

While Lebanon's Islamic community has been weakened due to the crises stemming from the (?past rifts) and Islamic states in the Middle East based on their implausible inclinations towards imperialist policies have contributed to strengthen the Zionists and weaken the Islamic front, this likelihood has emerged that there may occur some new developments as a result of the formation of new groupings in the Middle East, which arise due to the execution of the motivated strategy of the West and Zionism for reducing the force of the Islamic movement and the Muslim community.

The undeclared, but (?duly) formed front, including Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, the Lebanese Phalangists, and the Zionist regime, which has come into existence with the backing and encouragement of America and Britain, has resorted to some well organized activities in order to direct anti-Islamic struggles and demolish the foundations of the Islamic movement that has recorded certain sensational epics in the contemporary history of Lebanon and Palestine.

Abundant military aid and dispatch of personnel by the Iraqi regime to the usurper government of Michel 'Awn, sustained backing by the Baghdad regime to the advocates of the Camp David accord, as well as the orchestrated efforts of the Zionist regime and the Phalangists are taking place to pressurize Syria and Lebanon in order to gain two objectives. The first objective is to remove Syria from the frontline of the struggle against the Zionists. That issue will eventually lead to isolate Syria, bolster the Camp David faction, and speed up the process for compromising with the Zionists.

In that framework, too, the Iraqi regime is acting in line with the objectives of the Zionists, America, and Britain; giving a practical (?shape) to taking revenge from its age old rival. This is at a time when it seems that the rulers in Baghdad are thinking to create another Al-Qadisiyah in Lebanon in order to satiate their expansionist desire. That in itself is another danger that can well turn into a permanent crisis in the Middle East.

Association of expansionist feelings between the Zionist regime and the Ba'thist party of Iraq is uncontrollable in any framework and its main loss will come to all the Islamic states and even to the Arab countries of the Middle east.

The second object in creating such a crisis, which perhaps is also the most significant design, is to totally weaken the Islamic resistance that has gained momentum on two grounds. The first reason is the eyecatching growth of the Islamic and popular movement in the occupied Palestine that has made the Zionist regime helpless, apart from incapacitating the West to resolve the current dilemma to the Camp David process. The other reason is the considerable growth for making a return to the genuine spirit of Islam in the far lying regions of Islamic states. That poses a strategic threat to the West.

It must, however, be kept in mind that the Middle East is the nucleus of that Islamic movement and awakening. In order to control that all-embracing movement, the West has tested some new designs and to attain its sinister objective, it has engaged in a serious and decisive combat with the very forces of that movement.

Undoubtedly, the recent cultural offensive of the West against Islam in publishing and distributing the book "The Satanic Verses" is directly linked with the political and military onslaught against the Islamic movement in Lebanon and Palestine.

There is, however, made the assessment [as heard] that such motivations cannot take place in an uncalculated manner. In the face of all these plots, the Islamic world, now in the most sensitive phase of its history, needs to remain vigilant, enjoy an identity of views, and adopt a timely action.

The unified move of the Islamic world against the cultural offensive of the West in itself showed the potential and power of the Islamic community. And now in Lebanon, too, such a unified action can inflict a flesh blow on imperialism and Zionism.

It must be kept in mind that the dimensions of the plot which has been initiated in Lebanon are very extensive and deep rooted. And while they necessitate vigilance on the part of the Lebanese Muslims, another serious and decisive posturing by the world Muslims can have an amazing effect.

Now America and its other Western allies are preparing themselves for military intervention in Lebanon. Michel 'Awn, the military head of the Lebanese Phalangists, through reliance on those powers, has resorted to committing his unprecedented crimes against civilians of Lebanon, while the deadly silence being maintained by the Western mass media, coupled with lack of dynamism on the part of the heads of Islamic states, is adding to the dimensions of that conspiracy.

This is under the circumstances where the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Arab League are inclined to carry out their historic mission under these sensitive conditions—failing which there will be no guarantee that such conspiratorial moves may not gradually grip other Arab and Islamic states as well.

World imperialism and Zionism have, in this duel against the Islamic world, pinned their hopes on two issues: first, the military, financial, and political resources of their own as well as of their supporters; and second, to exploit the discord-seeking plots for eventually creating a tense crisis among the Islamic states. This last issue is a great importance. And the only way to check the fructification of these plots is to forge an all-embracing unity for countering these mysterious and conspiratorial measures.

Showing of 'Blasphemous Film' on Christ Condemned

LD2703172289 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance issued a statement condemning the showing of the film "The Last Temptation of Christ" at Istanbul's 8th film festival. The statement urges that the film festival be boycotted.

One part of the statement—issued by the Ministry's Cinematic Affairs Department—says: The showing of that blasphemous film, especially in a Muslim country, is an insult to His Eminence Christ, peace be on him, the world's Christians, and to the divine community in general. This move is in line with the world arrogance's ploys for attacking divine religions due to their fear of religion's role in awakening the oppressed nations.

Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran, out of respect for His Eminence Christ, peace to him, and for the Islamic community, which does not tolerate insult to any of the divine prophets, condemns this extensive cultural conspiracy of world arrogance and international Zionism. It further condemns the Istanbul film festival for accepting that insulting film. The Islamic Republic of Iran, therefore, is refraining from attending that festival.

Islamic Group Assails Turkey Over Dress Code

NC2803104689 Tehran International Service in Turkish 0400 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Text] The Islamic Enlightenment [teblig] Organization has issued a statement criticizing the decision adopted by the Turkish Government to ban the use of Islamic attire by female students of Turkish universities. The statement said: Preventing female students dressed in Islamic attire from entering the universities in Turkey when the Islamic world has launched an intensive opposition against "The Satanic Verses" is nothing less than an effort to mislead public opinion in the Islamic world, thus benefiting the enemies of Islam.

IRNA Notes Meeting of King Fahd, Mubarak

LD2703150289 Tehran IRNA in English 1450 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Athens, March 27, IRNA—The ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Cairo told the state-run Egyptian radio that two issues, the Palestinian problem and the Iran-Iraq peace process will be at the focus of talks between King Fahd and President Husni Mubarak.

The ambassador hoped that Saudi-Egyptian talks would produce good and fruitful results and that Fahd's efforts would lead to a lasting peace between Iran and Iraq.

The Saudi ruler arrived Monday afternoon in Cairo from Baghdad where he held two days of talks with Saddam Husayn on Iran-Iraq peace talks and other Arab issues.

In a commentary, Cairo Radio, speaking of "historical ties" between Cairo and Riyadh emphasized on Saudi support during the 1973 October war between Egypt and Israel when Saudi Arabia threatened to cut oil supplies to anyone standing against the Arab interests.

Lauding the "moderate policy" of Saudi Arabia, the radio pointed out that Cairo-Riyadh ties developed positively in the last years.

Both Riyadh and Cairo were the principal supporters of the 8-year Iraqi aggression on Islamic Iran.

Saudi Arabia has undertaken to bankroll the rebuilding of Basra, and according to reports has put the required funds at the disposal of the Ba'thist regime.

On July 31, 1987, Saudi police slaughtered in cold blood 400-odd hajj pilgrims—mostly Iranian—at the very doors of Allah's sacred house, where the shedding of even an animal's blood is prohibited.

UN Special Envoy Inspects Cease-Fire Line

NC2803051889 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Mr Marrack Goulding, special envoy of the UN secretary general to Iran, arrived in Ahvaz yesterday at the head of a delegation to inspect the cease-fire lines and to meet with UN forces stationed in the southern area. After his arrival in Ahvaz, he attended a meeting of the regional commanders of the UN forces and emphasized the need for further activities by these forces to safeguard the cease-fire. After inspecting the cease-fire lines, he returned to Tehran from Ahvaz last night.

Received by Velayati

LD2803110389 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] UN Special Envoy Marrack Goulding who has arrived in Tehran, in a meeting with Foreign Minister Velayati today, discussed the cease-fire along the Iran-Iraq border and incidents of violating the cease-fire, as well as the legal situation of the peacekeeping forces. According to a Central News Unit report, the foreign minister voiced the concern felt by the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the nonevacuation of our territories, and informed Mr Goulding about the repeated cases of violation of the cease-fire by the Iraqi regime and also the lack of any appropriate measures by the peacekeeping forces in this connection.

Aqazadeh Leaves for OPEC Meeting in Vienna

LD2803091789 Tehran IRNA in English 0912 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Tehran, March 28, IRNA—Iranian Oil Minister Gholamreza Aqazadeh left here for Vienna this morning to attend a session of the Monitoring Committee of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

The two-day session will start its work at the OPEC's secretariat in Vienna Wednesday.

Algeria, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela are members of the committee.

The OPEC oil ministers will study the current situation in the world oil market.

Musavi on Need To Follow Khomeyni's Guidance

LD2703122289 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] The first cabinet session of the new year was held this morning. At the meeting Prime Minister Musavi conveyed New Year's greetings and said: The new year is a special one in comparison with previous years. In this year, the government must act in a strong, coordinated, and correct manner.

Referring to the recent messages of his eminence the imam, the prime minister said: Those messages contain very sensitive and important points, the ramifications of which will become clear gradually. As a result of those messages, no ambiguity remains in the Islamic Republic of Iran's domestic and foreign policies.

The prime minister added: One of the most important axes of the recent message was his eminence the imam's cautionary note to officials in connection with the neglect of values and principles in the face of economic problems. Economic issues have great importance in their own place. However, economic problems must not be exaggerated or interpreted in such a way as to have negative effects on foreign policy or mar the revolution's values and principles and the defense of deprived and Hezbollah groups.

The prime minister said: Solutions must be found for economic problems and complexities. Those problems, however, must not be allowed to create the slightest doubt with regard to the revolution's principles, values, or ideals.

The prime minister explained: The principled line of the government—which takes its inspiration from the imam's views and which is based on support for the Hezbollah people, the deprived, and the revolution's institutions and global mission to spread the revolution—will govern in all areas, levels, and organizations of the government which is a servant of the people.

The prime minister added: If we remain true to our principles, we will also attain economic independence and comfort. If we neglect principles and values, we will not only lose our independence but we will also turn into an economic extension [za'edeh] of the arrogant system. We can be independent, self-reliant, and turn the wheels of our economy with our own hands.

The prime minister said: His eminence the imam spoke unambiguously of the danger of the infiltration of liberals and hypocrites [reference to the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization]. It is natural that everyone must be vigilant so that they do not become the hypocrites' mouthpiece without realizing it or wishing it.

The prime minister added: Undoubtedly, we will not move toward political and economic liberalism in any field. We feel no trepidation about the basic principles of our revolution. Continuing his remarks, Mr Musavi stressed: In the new year, which is the first year after the war, the country seriously needs to work. We must all try to do our utmost in this year and be very active.

The prime minister also stressed the need for greater efforts in launching the country's important economic projects in order to rejuvenate the entire country. Referring to the importance of providing basic goods in the current year, Mr Musavi said: Efforts must be made so that the policies of institutions are anti-inflationary.

He expressed optimism about the serious implementation of the new law against high prices and said: Unstable prices will only result in increased inflation; examples of that can be seen in other countries following the two world wars and in the high inflation rates of Latin America. Therefore, the imposition of the necessary controls by the judiciary and the government are an unavoidable necessity until production has increased and a balance has been established between supply and demand.

According to the Central News Unit, in continuation of today's Cabinet session, the country's important events and issues relating to Afghanistan and Lebanon were discussed and debated.

Majlis Debate Over Budget Proves 'Freedom'

LD2603133889 Tehran IRNA in English 1330 GMT 26 Mar 89

[Text] Tehran, March 26, IRNA—Extensive debates in the Majlis was an indication of how wrong the enemies of the Islamic Republic were in accusing it of dictatorship, the Majlis speaker has said.

"We must value this free arena," said Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani. "It is the best proof of freedom and democracy in our revolution and also the best proof of our enemies' disgrace."

Speaker Hashemi-Rafsanjani was speaking at the end of the debate last Monday over the budget for the new Iranian year, reported by the press today.

"Our enemies want to accuse our revolution of some kind of internal dictatorship and oppression," he said.

"But whoever listens to our discussions in the past few days can understand that this is nothing but an accusation. There is real freedom here."

The debate over the 53 articles of the budget bill lasted 12 days and nights with proposals forwarded for almost every article.

Many deputies criticized the budget for what they saw as its lack of direction, planning, high level of borrowing, and inflationary effects.

According to latest press reports the budget for the year starting March 21 envisages total foreign exchange income of dlrs 11.94 billion, including dlrs 9.88 billion from oil sales.

Foreign exchange expenditure for defence has been put at dlrs 1.8 billion, in addition to dlrs 2.5 billion for the import of basic goods, about dlrs 2 billion for development projects and Dlrs 900 million for various services.

Also a Health Ministry official announced Sunday that dlrs 488.3 million had been set aside for the import of pharmaceuticals, medical and laboratory equipment, and dried milk.

KAYHAN Cited on Postwar Reconstruction

LD2703154989 Tehran IRNA in English 1532 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Tehran, March 27, IRNA—The English daily "KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL" today dwelt on postwar reconstruction and warned against the economic traps of the West and the East.

Iran has entered the second decade of the Islamic Revolution and the imam's guidelines issued last Wednesday, should enable the government to reconstruct the country "without adopting Western or Eastern models or lessening the revolution's aspirations," it said.

Since war refugees provide the backbone for the country's autonomy the imam sought the assistance and cooperation of the war refugees—as the most devoted, deprived and sacrificing layer of society—for the reconstruction and renovation of ravaged towns and villages.

The daily warned against the pitfalls of foreign loans, and noted that "both the West and the East have made plans on Iran's reconstruction and their proposed financial assistance and credits are actually traps-in-disguise to contain the revolution's zeal and distinguishing identity."

Pointing to the strategic geo-political location of Iran, as one of the richest countries, it said the West needs Iran as much as Iran needs it, because Iran "possesses all the necessary components or resources for its reconstruction and for becoming powerful. But of importance is the correct use of these human and natural resources which the imam emphasizes in his message."

The imam's warning in this regard "is very illuminating," said KAYHAN. "He asks people and officials to be vigilant since both the power blocs will not rest until, as he says, they take the Islamic identity of the people away from them."

"The reconstruction issue calls not only for time and resources but also careful planning," it added.

KAYHAN concluded "the war refugees—as the epitome of resistance—and the general public who have tolerated years of difficulties are themselves able to reconstruct the country without foreign assistance which comes with too many strings attached."

Pakistan

Reportage on 2-Day Visit of UK Foreign Secretary

Met by Yaqub Khan

BK2703111189 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] The British foreign secretary, Mr Geoffrey Howe, arrived in Islamabad this afternoon on a 2-day visit to Pakistan. He was received at the airport by the foreign minister, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan.

'Unprecedented Security' in Force

BK2703115589 Hong Kong AFP in English 1151 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] Islamabad, March 27 (AFP)—Authorities threw an unprecedented security net around the airport as British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe arrived here Monday [27 March], following threats from Moslem fundamentalists to disrupt his visit.

Riot police cordoned off Islamabad airport where Sir Geoffrey was received by Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, witnesses said. Armed police also blocked all entry points to prevent a planned protest rally, witnesses said. The security operation was unprecedented for a foreign ministerial visit here, they said.

Leaders of several religious organisations and political parties were allowed however to hand Sir Geoffrey a four-page memorandum condemning official protection to Indian-born British novelist Salman Rushdie whose book "The Satanic Verses" is considered by Moslems as blasphemous.

The leaders, including several MP's [members of parliament], were allowed in after the government banned a planned rally of thousands of Moslems waving black flags in protest at the publication of the book in Britain and London's refusal to condemn Mr. Rushdie.

The memorandum handed to Sir Geoffrey said "vilification of any person has always been a crime. But vilification of a prophet is far more heinous crime."

"Circulation of such slanders through instruments of mass media under cover of freedom of expression can never be condoned," it said.

The country's Sunni and Shi'ite organisations had placed advertisements in newspapers urging people to greet the British foreign secretary with black flags "for patronising the writer of a derogatory book written against the Prophet Muhammad."

Police turned back people who had started gathering before Sir Geoffrey's arrival and government announcements broadcast on radio and television reminded people of a ban on assemblies of more than five people.

The country's pro-Iranian Shi'ite youth organisation had announced protest rallies in big cities against Sir Geoffrey's one-day visit.

Handed Note Protesting 'Verses'

BK2703162889 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe said that he has come to Pakistan to reinforce his government's tangible support of the successful restoration of the democratic process in Pakistan. Talking to newsmen at the airport on his arrival in Islamabad this afternoon, Sir Geoffrey said Britain supports the Afghan people's struggle for freedom and Pakistan's support for their cause. He said new political realities are emerging in Afghanistan since the withdrawal of Soviet troops from that country.

The foreign secretary said that Pakistan occupies a top position in Britain's foreign policy and international relations. He said the two countries enjoy a special relationship and have historical ties that have benefited both of them for a long time. These relations should not be affected by certain recent developments, he said.

A memorandum protesting the publication of "The Satanic Verses" was presented to Sir Geoffrey by National Assembly members Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Maulana Fazlur Rahman, Maulana Abdus Sattar Khan Niazi, Chaudhary Abdul Ghafoor, Senator Prof Khurshid Ahmad, Maulana Kausar Niazi, Allamah Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi, and Agha Murtuza Poya. The memorandum says that the entire book is highly blasphemous and has caused great indignation and provocation among all Muslims. The memorandum expresses the hope that the British Government and people will show sensitivity to the feelings of the Muslims of the world. It says resentment and anguish against this book is found in the entire Islamic world, and the Western countries should respond sympathetically to end this.

Later, addressing a news conference, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan said that the group has expressed the Pakistani people's deep resentment of the book's publication. He criticized the enforcement of Section 144 [banning the assembly of five or more persons in one place] to stop peaceful demonstrations, which is part of the normal democratic process.

Professor Khurshid Ahmad described the British foreign secretary's attitude and response as positive.

Sir Geoffrey welcomed the delegation and assured its members that their feelings and sentiments would be conveyed to the British Government. He said they will consider the memorandum and explore the possibility of taking necessary steps under British law to resolve the problem created by the publication of this book. The British foreign secretary expressed his deep sympathy with the Muslims over its publication.

Sir Geoffrey met with Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan in Islamabad today. They discussed matters of mutual interest.

Meets With Prime Minister

BK2703163389 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 27 Mar 89

[Text] The British foreign secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, called on the prime minister, Ms Benazir Bhutto, in Rawalpindi this evening. They exchanged views on bilateral matters, regional situation, and recent developments in the consolidation of democratic process in Pakistan. During the meeting, special emphasis was laid on further strengthening economic and trade relations between the two countries.

Speaks at Banquet

BK2803025289 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe have stressed the need for close and friendly relations and cooperation between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. They conveyed this while addressing a banquet hosted by the prime minister in honor of the UK foreign secretary in Rawalpindi last night.

The prime minister said that Pakistan appreciates the political and economic assistance extended by the United Kingdom during the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Ms Benazir Bhutto said that she is looking forward to her visit to the United Kingdom at the invitation of her British counterpart Margaret Thatcher.

The prime minister referred to the publication of the "The Satanic Verses" which has caused concern and anxiety for the Muslims all over the world. Geoffrey Howe said that the British Government realizes the extent of grief that has afflicted the Islamic world by publication of the blasphemous book.

The British foreign secretary paid tribute to Ms Benazir Bhutto for providing a successful leadership to the people in restoring democracy in Pakistan.

He referred to the situation in Afghanistan and said his country acknowledges and appreciates the generosity extended by the Pakistani people toward Afghan refugees. Howe said that the United Kingdom expects a bright future for the Afghan people at the culmination of their great struggle.

The British foreign secretary stressed the importance of historical ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. He said that with the restoration of democracy in Pakistan, the understanding and friendship between the two countries will further stabilize.

Explosion Near UK Building

BK2803044889 Hong Kong AFP in English 0449 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Text] Islamabad, March 28 (AFP)—A powerful bomb exploded in central Islamabad Tuesday, hours after British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe began a controversial visit here, police said.

The blast damaged the British Council Library building and several nearby shops and banks, but there were no casualties, they said.

The bomb, which police said was placed in an unfinished cabin behind the library in the posh Central Melody Market area exploded at around 1:00 a.m. (2000 GMT Monday), police said.

The explosion took place after police banned a planned rally against Sir Geoffrey's visit, which has already been cut short for security reasons.

Police said they believed the bomb was to protest against the publication in Britain of "The Satanic Verses", whose Indian-born author Salman Rushdie has been accused by Moslems of having blasphemed Islam.

It was the third attempt in less than two months on the British Council Library since a February 12 protest claimed eight lives when police opened fire on anti-Rushdie demonstrators.

IRNA on Bomb, Death Threats

LD2803081889 Tehran IRNA in English 0806 GMT 28 Mar 89

[Excerpt] Islamabad, March 28, IRNA—A bomb went out near the British Cultural Center here this morning, concurrently with the visit of British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe to Pakistan. The bomb shattered the building's windows, but no casualty was reported.

Pakistani Muslims staged demonstrations against London's support for Salman Rushdie, author of the blasphemous novel "The Satanic Verses" in front of the airport.

Fearing the increasing wrath by Pakistani Muslims over the Rushdie affair, Howe has cut short his visit cancelling his scheduled visit to Peshawar.

The British secretary arrived here Monday evening under tight security measures, and was immediately flown to his residence from the airport.

Pakistani Muslims welcomed him with black flags and chants of "Death to Howe, apostate Rushdie deserves death, we will kill Rushdie."

Pakistani officials did not allow about 30 foreign reporters to enter the airport hall to cover Howe's arrival.

"Publication of Rushdie's book was an insult to the Muslim world and its supporters had trampled upon the primary rights of human beings under the mask of freedom of expression," leaders of different parties in Pakistan said in a statement, submitted to Howe at the airport.

The statement, signed by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Maulana Fazlur Rahman, Maulana Abdul Sattar Khan Niazi, Khurshid Ahmad, Maulana Kausar Niazi, and Allamah Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi, also called for collection of all copies of the book and punishment of its writer.

"According to Quranic rulings, insult to prophecy is apostasy, and an apostate deserves death," Abdolsattar Niazi told reporters at the airport. [passage omitted]

Afghan Rebels Dissatisfied With Military Advice

BK2803041489 London BBC World Service in English 0215 GMT 28 Mar 89

[From the "Newsreel" program]

[Text] We turn now to Pakistan where the British foreign secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, has been thanked by Afghan rebel leaders for Britain's backing in their campaign against Afghan Government forces. But as our foreign affairs correspondent, (Jack Thompson), reports from Islamabad, mujahidin leaders based in Pakistan are continuing to express dissatisfaction with the advice being given them by the Pakistani military authorities.

[Begin Thompson recording] During the visit to Islamabad by the British foreign secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Afghan rebel leaders have been anxious to offer their thanks to him for what they see as British support for their position. They turned up in force at a reception for Sir Geoffrey at the residence of the British ambassador to Pakistan.

Privately though, many have reservations about the role of Pakistani military intelligence in the campaign to drive the Afghan forces out of Jalalabad, where the Afghan rebels hope to sight their provisional administration. They admit that the battle for Jalalabad has to be fought to demonstrate their viability. But some of them are critical of what they see as faulty advice on tactics given by the Pakistanis and an almost total dependence on military supplies from Pakistan.

At the same time, Pakistani leaders are saying that the rebel administration, which includes men like Prof Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, must start to show a measure of competence, not least by demonstrating that he can actually run a cabinet secretariat. The government of Benazir Bhutto also admits that it would face problems if an out-and-out Muslim fundamentalist government were to take power in Kabul. [end recording]

Mojaddedi on Jalalabad Operation

BK2803133089 London BBC World Service in English 1200 GMT 28 Mar 89

[From the "Newsreel" program]

[Text] The British foreign secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, who is in Pakistan, has had a meeting with leaders of the interim government formed by the Afghan guerrillas, including their president, Prof Sibghatullah Mojaddedi. He said afterwards he promised them an additional 2 million pounds in aid.

Earlier, Professor Mojaddedi denied that there had been Pakistani help in the mujahidin attack on the Afghan city of Jalalabad. He was speaking with our foreign affairs correspondent, Jack Thompson, in Islamabad.

[Begin Thompson recording] Professor Mojaddedi said the rebels were fighting independently; there were no Pakistan soldiers or advisers with the forces attacking Jalalabad. Much of the mujahidin's current military expertise was being provided by officers who defected from the Kabul government army. Certainly the mujahidin consulted their friends, both in Pakistan and other Muslim countries; but, said Professor Mojaddedi, they did not interfere in our affairs.

He read out to me the latest report he received from Jalalabad, which said that the mujahidin continue to capture government posts. They had also ambushed the government convoy on the road between Jalalabad and Kabul. Hundreds of trucks and even some tanks have been destroyed. He said government aircraft had bombed the civilian population in Jalalabad, inflicting many terrible casualties. Antipersonnel mines had also taken their toll. Professor Mojaddedi put the number of mujahidin dead at about 200.

I asked him how his rebel government managed to function even though they still have no base in Afghanistan. He said the mujahidin effectively control 90 to 95 percent of the country. They run schools and clinics. And he said his government had held its first cabinet meeting in Afghan territory, although he did not say where.

This is a picture of success that [was] also painted by Pakistani officials. They too deny there are any Pakistani troops inside Afghanistan. They are also predicting, although it is not clear on what basis, that Jalalabad will fall to the mujahidin within 7 to 10 days. [end recording]